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by Marion Southwood

See Wright, American

Fiction 1851-75

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TIT FOR TAT.

A NOVEL.

BY

A LADY OF NEW ORLEANS.

This child of ours, this Republic, shall live;
And we will nourish it.

NEW YORK:
GARRET & COMPANY, 18 ANN STREET.
LONDON:
CLARKE, BEETON & COMPANY.

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PREFACE.

If it be true that "Good wine needs no bush," it may be said that a good book needs no Preface. I naturally thought mine a good book, so, to the London edition, wrote no preface. My motive for bursting into print in that modern Babylon, was on the surface. Here, it is less apparent. I will explain it.

The year of grace, Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-four, will be memorable in England, for the breaking out of the Uncle Tom fever. A chronic ophthalmia overspread the vision of English Humanitarians, who, look at what they might, could see nothing but specks of black. They were haunted by black spectres. In all the races of the Earth, none were worthy of pity unless its color was black.

The Black fever was at its height, when I took it kindly. The English, acclimated to the home disease, caught it from America. I, an American, was infected in England.

There is a race of beings, by the initiated, facetiously denominated "chummies," which exists only in humane Britain. Outside barbarians call them chimney-sweeps. This race is black, not from blood, but from soot.

I beheld specimens of these crippled, distorted, bleeding bits of humanity, and, at sight, was taken down by a sympathetic fever. In my paroxysms, I would exclaim—"Oh! ye Dukes and Duchesses! ye Lords and Commons! ye Priests and Laymen! who lift up your hands and let fall your tears at the woes of Uncle Tom, thousands of miles away; heard ye never the wailing cry of the poor 'chummy' who weeps

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daily on your thresholds? Oh! Sutherland House! Oh! Exeter Hall! whose walls reverberate with shrieks for freedom to the African; have ye no echoes for the wretched children who shriek for relief from torture on your hearthstones?

In my lucid intervals I reflected that the morning plaint of the chimney-sweep was uttered at an hour when philanthropists sleep. That philanthopists never hear it. That they were ignorant of its existence. They shall remain ignorant no longer, thought I, so I wrote my book.

The public was grateful, so were my publishers; for the book sold. I have always thought the philanthropists were the same, but they never told me so. They were too busy, at the moment, with Mrs. Stowe and the Black Swan. However, in thanking the public, be it understood, I include the philanthropists.

To the entire Press of Scotland I am under deep obligation, for its endorsement of my statements; its appreciation of my motives; and its approbation of my humble effort in what it was pleased to call a righteous cause.

I am also grateful to the English Press, for its unmitigated abuse, and its denial of the existence of the enormities I have pictured, although in every case they are verified by official documents and reports.

I have said I was grateful. Gratitude is not often evoked by misrepresentation. It was so in this case, for a good reason.

This is my reason: I have, from my infancy, believed that the English Press could see no wrongs to poor humanity, save such as were inflicted outside of Her Majesty's dominions; that if suffering from famine, it would cry, "This is a land of plenty;" and that while injustice, oppression and cruelty stalks through the land, it blindfolds itself with a bandage it calls the British Constitution, which it looks upon as a sort of disinfecting fluid against all social and political evils.

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Now, if from his infancy a man has entertained a profound conviction, he feels proud of his precocity when his matured judgment confirms it. My impression of the English Press is confirmed, and I am grateful.

To the "London Athenæum" I am particularly so. My gratitude for its abuse it must share with its cotemporaries; but it added to the weight of obligation, under which I bend, by knowing too much; a most unusual fault. It attributed my work to an American gentleman residing in London, who certainly never saw the book before it was published, and may not have seen it since.

Too much knowledge makes men presume. Presumption is dangerous. The "London Athenæum" found it so. It was forced to make a public apology, and to pay the costs, in an action for slander, instituted against it by the gentleman in question.

I should scarcely have mentioned the "London Athenæum," but for the extraordinary statement it made in its justification, which was, that its information was obtained at the American Legation. If this be so, I have, as well for myself as for my countrymen, to thank the Honorable James Buchanan, or whoever, amongst those by whom he was surrounded, the informant may have been, for his strict adherence to the rules of diplomacy, and of talking about that of which he knew nothing.

Hoping that the reception of my book on this side of the water, will give me an opportunity of returning thanks to the American Public and Press, in a second edition,

I remain, their devoted Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

White Sulphur Springs, August, 1856.

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TIT FOR TAT.

CHAPTER I.

"Now, then, Mills, are you ready? Make haste; down with your gun. Can't you look sharp?"

This question was addressed by a suspicious-looking character to a young man, who looked out of the lattice window of a humble cottage in the village of Deer-Glen, in the county of Stafford.

Midnight was just ringing out on the chimes of the old Hall in the valley as these words were spoken.

The village lies on a hill behind the Hall.

Magnificent oaks, in a dense belt, grow around that ancient building, and shut out from the view of its lordly owners the long straggling row of cots, with here and there a country ale-house, forming the village of Deer-Glen.

"How many of you are there?" said Mills in reply to the summons. "Are we strong enough to knock over the game-keepers, if we meet them?"

"Oh, plenty! There are four of us down here now; and you will make five. Make haste down, and don't make a noise."

The window above was shut. The young man who had so lately been speaking from it retired, and in a few minutes issued from the house with his gun.

The moon had already set. The night, therefore, was rather dark as Mills joined his four companions, and they all five together turned into the little lane that led from the village to one of the back entrances of the park, through which ran, from end to end, a public foot-road, originally intended, no doubt, for the use of the villagers going to the church.

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The church stood in the park, and as the five poachers, availing themselves of their right of way, passed by this path, they came directly under the walls of the venerable but rural temple of religion.

In a few seconds three of the men jumped over the stile that led through the church-yard.

Young Mills hesitated, and sat for a moment on the wall.

"Come, come, man, what are you losing time for?" said the leader of the gang, who followed up last, as if to make sure of bringing his men to the fight.

"I was only thinking of something, Gibbons," said Mills, jumping into the pathway, and going slowly across the church-yard. Then, laying his hand on a humble tombstone as he passed by, he paused again.

"What are you dawdling about?"

"If my poor mother, who sleeps here, could see me going on this errand, Gibbons, do you think she would lie so quiet?"

"Errand, you fool! what errand are you going on, except to get a hare for your sick wife?"

"Well, Gibbons, I don't know, but this is the first time that I ever went on this errand, that other folks, you know, call poaching, and I think I'll turn back from it. It does not make my mind altogether comfortable to get anything that does not actually belong to me."

"You be hanged, Mills! Where can be the harm of taking a little game from this close-fisted old dog, Lord Hardheart? He has got so much of it, he could not count it if he tried; and I should like to know why it is more his than mine. The hares come and nibble my cabbages at ten o'clock, and they are running about his park at twelve o'clock. Are they not just as much mine as they are his?"

"The law says, no, Gibbons."

"Law be hanged! What's the law, I should like to know, but the rule of a pack of humbugs, who happen to have got the upper hand of us, and, being born law-makers, take precious good care to make all the laws in their own favour. If I see a hare nibbling in my garden I dare not shoot him, because the law says I must pay somebody for a licence to carry a gun.

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Why, is that justice? Would any people who make just laws, or had any hand in making their own laws, ever make such a law as that?"

"Well, no, Gibbons, it is not fair, certainly; but, however, I cannot quite see the right you have to carry a gun upon another man's land, because you may not carry the gun on your own."

"Oh, yes, you have. They make the laws against us because *they* have the power to do so; and we come and shoot game on their lands to-night because *we* have the power to do so. It is only a question of who has got the power to do as he likes; and as we have got the power to-night, I say, come and do it."

"Well, I will come, because I said I would; but I do not like it. However, here goes."

The unfortunate young man once more put his gun on his shoulder, and stepped forward. In another instant he and his comrades had quitted the church-yard, followed the foot-path down to the lake, crossed the bridge, and, keeping as well as they could to the left, out of sight from the windows of the Hall, stole away towards one of the best game-covers on the estate, an old plantation, where some half-dozen cedars, monarchs of the forest, threw abroad their dark gigantic arms, casting a melancholy shadow over the whole neighbourhood.

"Now, Mills," whispered Gibbons, when the party had fairly entered the cover, "you stand under these cedars; I'll go round near to the waterfall, with the other three chaps, and we will drive the game up towards you. As we go, we will spread our nets out through the plantation across the road. Most likely, as we come up we shall be able, with our sticks and nets, to get a few pheasants and a hare or two without firing. But you load with very little powder, and if you get a chance of a couple of sure shots, you may fire in that direction, out away towards the park wall."

With these words, Gibbons left young Mills under the shade of the cedar-trees.

Even now the novice in crime seemed hardly reconciled to the work before him, for, after standing in a musing attitude for a moment or two, he put down his gun against the base of

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the cedar-tree, with the air of a man about to abandon an enterprise, rather than pursue it with vigour.

At this moment, however, as Gibbons and his men were walking down the path of the plantation, one of them came against a copper wire, which, although set across the green alley, was imperceptible to the eye.

"By Jove!" cried the fellow, as soon as he felt what he had done. Before he could say more a bright flash illumined the whole of the wood, shooting upwards like a rocket to the sky, and instantly a roar equal to that of a piece of ordnance was heard through the plantation, and, simultaneously with it, the tramp from the numerous running feet of the keepers on the watch, mingled with cries and oaths.

"Here are the blackguards! Cut 'em down! Shoot 'em! Cut 'em down!"

Poor Mills' hesitation came too late. The flash and the report were caused by the detonation of a detecting-gun, which, simple and effective in its management, had been set in the path of the poachers by the gamekeepers, who well knew that where the best game roosts there, most likely, would the night depredators be found.

Unhappy Mills! Unaccustomed to this part of the park, he knew not which path of escape to take. Had he only remained silent under the shadow of the cedar-trees, all might have been well; but in the confusion and alarm he relied upon his comrade Gibbons, who had dragged him into this danger, to extricate him from it, and, dashing after that worthless leader, he cried, "Which way shall I run, Gibbons? which way shall I run?"

"This way, you thief!" roared out a stentorian voice; while a heavy blow, dealt on Mills' head from behind, felled him to the earth, and left him in a great degree insensible.

The gamekeeper, who had come up in Mills' rear, threw himself upon his prostrate body, and, with a short bit of cord, which he dragged from his pocket, tightly bound his victim's arms behind him, before he had recovered his consciousness sufficiently to struggle.

"There they go, right down to the waterfall. Fire at them! Shoot them! Knock them over before they get into the road,"

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sang out the gamekeeper who had captured poor Mills, as he cheered on his men.

The dying sound of retreating footsteps was heard for a few minutes in the silence of the woods, and by the time this sound ceased it was succeeded by the groans of young Mills, who, returning to sense and pain, struggled in vain to get rid of the bonds round his arms and rise from the ground.

"Lie still, you blackguard, or I will knock the brains out of you!" said the keeper, sitting upon him, and flourishing the cudgel with which he had already inflicted so severe a blow.

Finding that resistance was useless, his unhappy captive submitted in silence, and remained quiet until the other keepers were coming up to the spot.

"Which of them have you bagged, Jim?"

"Why, here is a new hand at the bellows; it is young Mills—it is something new for him to take to poaching. I suppose we shall have the whole village at it by and by. How came you to let the others get off?"

"Well, Mr. Southern, I did my best to catch them, but they are so uncommon long-legged; the moment they saw the blue light they cut away through the park, and over the fence, into the road, and were off in no time."

"Well, as we have not got the rest, we'll make this young fellow smart for it; and I'll warrant him I'll teach him what sort of a trade he has been coming to learn to-night. Here, my boys, lay a hand, each of you, on this fellow's collar, and give me his gun, which stands up there by the cedar-tree; and, hark ye, master vagabond—if you attempt to get away, I will just put this double-barrel charge into you."

In this very disagreeable position, an under-gamekeeper holding him on each side, and the head-gamekeeper and three others following him behind, young Mills was marched straight down from the cedar copse to the Hall.

As they pursued their path, they came in full view of the house, a fine old mansion, with its long-peaked gables and turreted chimneys, large Gothic windows, and quaint outbuildings. Before it lay an extensive lake, in which it is reflected as in a mirror.

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One solitary light burning in the bedchamber of its noble owner, the Marquis of Hardheart, was the only sign of life that was displayed; all else was dark and shadowy as the cedars that grew both by its western and its eastern front.

Making a little *détour* to reach the bridge, the keepers and their prisoner marched straight for the house; and, going round to the back door, conducted Mills to one of the large, empty beer-cellars, which, unpossessed of any window, walled all round, arched with brick overhead, and entered by a strong oaken door, presented as secure a prison as most gaolers would desire for the general run of rustic criminals.

Having thrust Mills into this dark, damp place, without even a particle of straw to sit on, the gamekeeper locked the door, and then, calling to him one of his under-keepers, stationed him there as a sentry, while he himself went to ring up my lord's valet, and send word to Lord Hardheart that he had secured a prisoner poaching in the preserves.

CHAPTER II.

And who was Mills, the melancholy tenant of this dungeon? Was there anything in his past history which could ameliorate the miserable reflections natural to any man in such a position? Alas, no! But, on the other hand, there was much to embitter them.

Mills was the only son of a man in the village who had hitherto passed as one of its most respectable inhabitants. Forty years before the date of our story, his father had left Deer-Glen as a young man in the rank of a labourer; and, after an absence of many years, had returned an independent person; when, building a little cottage for himself in one of the best parts of the village, he, with his wife and two children, lived quietly in this spot for many years.

At last his wife died, and his only son made what the father called an imprudent marriage, with the pretty but portionless daughter of a small farmer in an adjoining parish. Old Mills, after some little demur, took them both into his house; and,

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having thus proved his forgiveness, declared his intention of setting up the young couple in a small farm belonging to Lord Hardheart, which the steward, with the sanction of the marquis, promised him.

When the time, however, came for accepting young Mills as a tenant, his lordship changed his mind, brought in a tenant who was a stranger to the village and estate, and gave the go-by to the disappointed bridegroom.

This conduct produced a bad effect in a twofold degree. It exasperated the young man, who was thus disappointed, after having expectations held out of having the farm; and it made old Mills feel more keenly than he otherwise would the burden of his son's marriage; while, as if to deepen the gloom of the case, it became evident, at the end of the first year, that the young and pretty Mrs. Mills would present her father-in-law with a grandchild.

In this condition, it has always been allowable for ladies to take particular fancies; and the fancy Mrs. Mills took was to have a roasted hare for dinner.

When this was told to Mills, senior, smarting under the refusal of the farm to his son, the additional expense of his household, and the prospect of that expense being increased by grandchildren, he gravely replied, "Roast hare—pack of fidgets and nonsense! Who do you think is going to buy game for such ridiculous fancies? You may think yourself very well off to get a bit of boiled leg of mutton."

However, Mrs. Mills, junior, was not at all reconciled to substituting boiled leg of mutton for roast hare; but, as her husband's funds were rather low, he, instead of directing his steps to the market, had recourse to the cottage of the noted poacher of the village, Gibbons, and asked him the price of a hare.

Gibbons, unfortunately, like other leaders, could not do business without followers.

Sundry convictions in the neighbourhood of Lord Hardheart had sent into gaol several of Gibbons' rank and file; he had long fixed his eye on young Mills for a likely recruit, as an active, supple fellow, and a noted good shot. Instead, therefore, of offering to sell him a hare, he took the seductive course

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of advising the young man to keep his money in his pocket, and shoot a hare for himself.

The end of this advice we have already seen. Bitterly did poor Mills curse his own folly during the dreary interval that elapsed between the hour of one o'clock, when he was thrust into the beer-cellar, and the hour of ten o'clock, when the door was once more opened, and between two rows of keepers he was ushered into the servants' hall, to undergo an examination before Lord Hardheart.

And who was Lord Hardheart?

Lord Hardheart was a specimen of a large class of the English aristocracy. In the peerage he held the rank of a marquis. In his county he was the Lord Lieutenant. In his person he stood considerably above six feet, but was neither strongly nor compactly formed. His countenance was imperious, and bore marks of pride, and traces of that which, if it could not be called an unamiable disposition, was something close approaching to it.

In his own character his lordship was one of those unaccountable contradictions, some of whom cross every man's path. Those who knew him very intimately seemed attached to him, and gave him the character of a sound and stanch friend; but with the world generally his manners were harsh, abrupt, scant of courtesy, and for a person in his position decidedly ill-bred.

His income was slender for his rank, and this in England, perhaps more than in any other country, imposes upon a man the necessity of watching with extreme scrutiny his expenditure: always a delicate and disagreeable duty for any man to discharge. Act as you will, high ancestral rank, in a country of such universal toadyism as Great Britain, always is and must be subject to a host of expectations, to which it is not a sufficient answer to say that they ought never to be entertained, and never can be realised.

To discharge the duties of such a position with any degree of popularity requires an exceedingly bland and courteous bearing. Denials must be constantly on the lips, but they must be given with such a kind and genial manner as to reconcile the person denied to the party denying.

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It is, indeed, a great misfortune that persons of high rank do not more frequently know, or do not more constantly bear in mind, the great absolute value that attaches to trivial kindnesses at the hands of distinguished people.

Were this fact properly estimated, how few men would be so indiscreet, not to say extravagant, as to neglect availing themselves of a currency that costs them so little as gentle words and polished manners.

Lord Hardheart had been reared to the profession of arms, and once wore the steel and purple of "The Horse Guards blue." Afflicted with a hot, impetuous temper, it never seemed to occur to him that the feelings of others might with propriety be consulted before giving way to the vicious indulgence of his own. There was also a great want of general kindness in his nature. I do not know whether his skin bled when he cut it, or whether he felt pain like other people. It is very possible that he might not have adopted a Spartan's feeling, as the model for his own sensations, but he always seemed to set it up as a very proper measure for the endurance of every other person.

Few men have the hardihood to speak of the sufferings of others with the extreme *sangfroid* which it has been my lot on more than one occasion to hear from the lips of Lord Hardheart.

His property engaged his chief attention, and, being a man of fair moderate abilities, there was every promise that the next marquis would enjoy an ample revenue.

This next marquis apparent was his only child by his first wife :—Eustatius, a boy of rare beauty, in whose expression there seemed to concentre not only all one would wish to see in a child, but that which irresistibly struck the beholder as something he had always before desired to behold, but till then had never met.

The boy's disposition well answered to his appearance. He was slightly mischievous, with abundance of daring and high courage ; but such was his generosity and loveable disposition, so freely he forgave every punishment inflicted upon him—so frank, open, and warm-hearted was he in all that he did or said, that he seemed to carry away the love and admiration of all who came near him,

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In extenuation of the harshness of his noble father, it may be charitable to suppose that it in some degree arose from his concentrating the whole of his affection on this child.

Lord Hardheart's first wife was a lovely person, not quite his equal in station. He had married her from uncontrollable passion. She died soon after the birth of her son, and before any domestic jars had occurred between her and her lord to impair the image of love she had left upon his mind.

For one or two years after her death grief held him too completely in subjection to think of any other marriage. At length, the remembrance of past happiness proved too strong for prudence, and at the end of two years and six months from his first wife's death he had married a considerable heiress, with almost as many suitors as she had thousands in her fortune.

This last union proved a most unhappy one. The heiress had been petted, and spoiled, and flattered, and never knew how to give way—the last kind of character that was suitable for Hardheart.

After a few years spent in constant bickering, this ill-assorted pair agreed to part.

Lord Hardheart lived chiefly at his ancestral hall, Deer-Glen, with his son; while the Marchioness of Hardheart, childless, and miserable with all her rank and wealth, fell back upon that grand source of English consolation, a most devoted toady and her house in Grosvenor-square.

In politics Lord Hardheart was a Conservative, or, as it would have been called in old times, a Tory.

In his eyes the present was always a most inauspicious time to reform; it was always dangerous to admit the people to so large a share of power and government, though he saw no danger, by the way, in allowing them to support both by their taxes. It was always hazardous, he said, to put down, just at present, any particular abuse. Whenever corruption was to be prevented, it was always vain, at this moment, to make the attempt —human nature would be human nature still—until something was done that was never likely to be accomplished.

As a very natural corollary to this kind of character, Lord

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Hardheart had not the slightest faith in humanity. He never scrupled to proclaim his opinion that any attempt on the part of the Legislature by humane laws to shorten the pangs of suffering, to ameliorate the condition of the poor, to interpose the hand of protection between them and the rich and powerful, to shield the humble and the weak, to protect the child against the master and the woman against the sot, was empty clap-trap, humbug, mere humanity-mongering and popularity-hunting.

On the other hand, if the question arose whether the farmers on Lord Hardheart's estate had their rents too low, whether they were slack in preserving game, or whether the steward of the establishment allowed six pounds to be spent when five would do, then his lordship was up in arms on the instant: there was no reform too rigorous or too immediate; there was no corruption that should be so little spared, or could be more easily put down; no person had such a right to overrule the household as he who paid for it; and if there was a thing for which on principle he had a thorough detestation and abhorrence, it was that base and corrupt practice by which servants in noble families —to wit, cook, butler, footman, house-steward, groom of the chambers, aye, down even to the very still-room maid—all received their Christmas bribes from the traders who supplied his lordship's family, in order that no improper fault might be found with the said tradesmen's articles, thereby to lose his lordship's custom. Such Christmas bribes, Lord Hardheart did not scruple to say, came out of his lordship's pocket at the last, if not in the first instance, and that they formed a species of corruption which he would spare no pains nor power to exterminate.

Reform was an excellent thing, in short, when it was to do justice to himself, but a most dangerous thing when it was only to accomplish justice to other people. Strange to say, Lord Hardheart would have been utterly surprised if anyone had told him that whether his lordship was a Reformer or was not a Reformer, wholly depended upon the fact of whether the abuse was felt by himself or other people.

The greater part of his time being spent at his family seat, he took great pains and delight in everything appertaining to

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it; preserved game with a fierceness unrivalled, and was never so happy as when dabbling in bricks and mortar, and either planning as his own architect, or carrying out the plans of professional people, with improvements of his addition.

With all Lord Hardheart's sternness, he had some marvellously weak points in his character; superstition was one. When his only son and heir was born, he told the surgeon, Dr. Spurgin, who had the best practice in the neighbourhood of Deer-Glen, to mark the boy with three stars on the right shoulder, as being sure to bring great luck to him. Dr. Spurgin, as a man of science, remonstrated, and at last told the marquis that the "best mode to make the child lucky was to ask God's blessing on him in earnest prayer." This simple truth the peer never forgave Spurgin for uttering; and to prove to the doctor his lordship's obstinacy and the futility of all opposition, when the doctor next saw the child, he bore on his right shoulder three vermilion stars, tattooed by the marquis's own hand.

Breakfast at Deer-Glen was, like every other thing in the house, punctual to a minute. At nine o'clock it came on the table, and at twenty minutes past nine the marquis rose and left the room.

On the day succeeding the night during which our tale opens, he adjourned from the breakfast-room to the library, and thence to the servants' hall, where, duly surrounded by keepers and constables, stood the unfortunate prisoner, Mills, before a table, at which was seated Mr. James, his lordship's attorney, who also acted as his clerk of the peace, when his lordship sat as justice.

"Bring in the prisoner," said Lord Hardheart, as he walked into the room. "Mr. Twaddletoady will be here in a minute."

Before Lord Hardheart had done speaking, in came Mr. Twaddletoady, a perfect specimen of his class, of which at least a dozen magistrates may be found in every county in England: little whipper-snappers, with small ferret eyes, turn-up noses, and short cropped whiskers; so vulgar, so sharp, and so disagreeable, as perpetually to offer the impression that they have just been modelled from the dust of a highway on a March day with a little sour small beer. Originally educated, many of them, in attorneys' offices, they come into the possession of a little land,

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and immediately begin to make all the interest in their power to get the appointment of justices of the peace.

This position Twaddletoady pre-eminently possessed the English requisites for obtaining. He soon made evident to his patrons that there was no amount of questionable or disagreeable work he was not ready to undertake in the county; and having a little smattering of law in one of its least enlightened forms, it was thought he would be convenient in helping along those various county jobs and petty manœuvres which so invariably distinguish the race of English country magistrates.

On hearing these qualifications described to him, Lord Hardheart immediately perceived what a useful factotum Twaddletoady would prove, and at once popped him into the commission of the peace, thereby giving him power to sit with his brother magistrates at quarter sessions, and try and transport his fellow-creatures.

One would imagine that in a country boasting of its civilisation so incessantly as England does, that she would require her magistrates, who administer so large a portion of her severe laws, to pass through some examination as to their knowledge of those laws before they are allowed to adjudicate, and try, and transport their fellow-creatures under them. But no! strange as it may be to say, no such examination is thought necessary. The liberties of Englishmen are so inferior in value to the patronage and jobbing of her pudding-headed squires and peers, that learning, education, and knowledge are despised and ignored, and the only qualification required is one—*credat Judæus*—of money! What a relic of serfdom and barbarism! Yes, in England, a magistrate is put upon the bench with the whole power of the law confided to him; and whether he knows anything about it, or whether he does not, is a matter of equal indifference, provided only that he has got so much money or money's-worth in land! And this, Americans, in "merrie" England, perpetually vaunting her *freedom*—oh, what a blasphemy on the sacred name of freedom!—which can only exist by a perfect administration of the law.

In every other country but England it is considered that valuable services must be paid for, and that the man whose

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services fetch no remuneration is too incapable to render a service worthy of acceptance. Common sense at once recognises the truth of this proposition—that without fair remuneration nothing can be obtained worth the obtaining.

In England, however, common sense is set at defiance in relation to services of the highest possible moment. She pays her judges salaries of five, and eight, and ten, and twelve thousand a year; but her country magistrates, the functionaries who have transported far more of her population than all the judges together, are allowed to discharge their functions wholly unremunerated, and for this reason are nick-named "the great unpaid."

As a natural consequence, in no country under the sun can there be found a system so utterly repugnant to all propriety as the system of unpaid magistrates in Great Britain. Their decisions, as a matter of course, must be constantly illegal; for it is absurd to suppose that any man, whatever his capacities, can intuitively discharge the highest duties of human beings—that, namely, of judges—without possessing any knowledge of the laws which they are called to administer.

Arbitrary and overbearing conduct on the bench, illegal sentences, harsh and unjust distortions of the law, and jobbery in all its aspects—the rich defying one set of laws, the poor ground to ruin under another—these form the common character of the English unpaid magistracy.

All sorts of motives lead men to apply for this responsible and, too often, disgusting post of authority.

The man who discharges his duty as a country magistrate must of necessity often be the unwilling medium of plunging his fellow-creatures into sorrow and distress.

At the quarter sessions of every county a number of prisoners are tried, averaging from thirty to a hundred at a time. Many of these were constantly transported when transportation was carried on, and are now condemned to years of penal servitude instead, and their families by such sentences plunged into poverty, ruin, and grief of every kind. One would think, therefore, that no one whose heart beat in the right place could volunteer to put himself in the position of inflicting these

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penalties, unless as a stern matter of duty and in the discharge of his profession. But what are the motives that guide the English country gentleman to volunteer to such an office, and to become a sort of moral executioner of his fellows? Some men desire to become magistrates because they are thus, even though temporarily, introduced into the society of their betters —a leading but miserable feature in English toadyism, when it is remembered that the companionship terminates with the judicial forms that bring them together. With others, the desire to sit upon the bench arises from the increased facility thereby given of preserving game by the commitment of poachers; for, although there is a sort of rule that no man acts as magistrate in his own case, still there is an additional fear amongst the poor to offend against the man in authority; while, on the other hand, there is naturally a general inclination among brother magistrates to do what they can for one of their own order. With others, they consider themselves mere nobodies in the county where they reside, unless they can style themselves as being "IN THE COMMISSION OF THE PEACE."

Americans, what say you?—is this or is it not a barbarous prostitution of a sacred office?

That such paltry motives should be sufficient for a man to undertake the most serious and most harrowing of responsibilities, without any emolument for time lost, without any knowledge of the duties to be discharged, is only one more proof, if any were wanting, of the innate depravity of the human heart; and that men doing these things should be honoured as men serving their country, instead of laughed at as men caricaturing it, is a most extraordinary feature of English society.

On the present occasion, Mr. Twaddletoady came expressly to do Lord Hardheart the service to commit his poachers. The two worthy fountains of law and justice took their seats on the bench, warmly discussing some question of local politics, while their clerk went through the examination of the witnesses. Twaddletoady then signed the commitment, and ordered the prisoner to be removed.

"Perhaps, sir, before you do it," suggested the clerk, "it

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would be as well to call on the prisoner to know if he has anything to say in defence."

"Oh, you may go through that form," said Twaddletoady; "but what defence can he have?"

The form was gone through. The prisoner declined to say anything, and this was added to the depositions. Bail having been accepted, the conclave broke up, the magistrates returning to the library, and the unhappy prisoner, fall of self-upbraiding, going back to his wife, *minus* the game for which he had risked so much, and with a most serious conviction hanging over his head to threaten impending ruin.

CHAPTER III.

THE commitment of the prisoner, as recorded in the last chapter, took place only a short period of time in advance of the spring assizes for the county town of Stafford. In a few days he would be placed at the bar to take his trial before the noted Baron Grim—a man who, whatever his faults were, was clearly free from that memorable judgment,

That e'en his failings leaned to mercy's side.

Nothing seemed to please him better than getting a conviction from a jury, unless it were the giving a heavy punishment when that conviction was once obtained.

This harsh and pitiless spirit was well developed in his lordship's face, which was as much like that of a vulture as a man's face could well be, chiefly composed as it was of little dark eyes and an enormous beak nose—a nose that, if you had not first seen it on a human countenance, you would have pronounced a caricature of some inconsistent artist. His voice, too, well accorded with his countenance—it was harsh and unmusical, like something "jangled out of tune."

When, therefore, old Mills, the father, heard that Baron Grim was the coming judge of assize to preside in the criminal court, and before whom, therefore, his son must be tried, he thought it a mere waste of hope and time and money to follow

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up the advice of the attorney he consulted, and get his son defended by counsel. Far wiser, he thought, it would be to call upon Lord Hardheart, and, appealing *ad misericordiam*, to offer that his son should plead guilty, and to ask his lordship to recommend him to mercy.

Having determined to take this most sensible course, he walked down to the Hall, and on sending in his name to Lord Hardheart, Mills was at once admitted to the presence of the marquis, who sat in what he called his muniment-room. This was a room on the basement of the house made fireproof, and in which were kept, in iron boxes, the title-deeds of the Hardheart estate.

No one was ever allowed to enter this room unless the marquis was present. The door was made of iron, and of the same material the shutters of the windows; and his lordship always kept the key in his own custody.

Mills found the nobleman sitting near the fire, with a heap of papers strewed about his feet, busy tearing up and burning letters. As the old man entered the room, his lordship never looked up from his occupation, but said, in a harsh, hard voice—

"What do you come to bore me about? What is your name? Who are you?"

These questions were all put so rapidly as to allow of no time for reply between them.

At last, old Mills, finding the marquis silent, made a low bow, and answered, "My lord, my name is Mills. I am the unfortunate father of that poor young man who was taken poaching in your lordship's park some short time since. It is his first offence, my lord. He is deeply sorry for it, and I am almost broken-hearted about it. He is my only son. I never knew him go wrong before, and I am come to ask your lordship, if he pleads guilty to his indictment, whether your lordship will kindly recommend him to mercy?"

"Why should I?"

"It is his first offence, my lord."

"It is the first time he is found out."

"The first offence, my lord, at all. I am sure he never poached before in his life."

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"How do you know that? An old fellow like you can know nothing of what is done while you are asleep. How can I tell that this is his first act of poaching? The offence is bad enough in itself. Why should I recommend him to mercy?"

"My lord, he bears an excellent character up to this time, and has come of respectable parents."

"I am not so sure of that. How you got your livelihood you best know. The world says you have made your money by smuggling; if so, smuggling is little better than thieving, and poaching is next kin to it."

"Your lordship is mistaken, for my money was never made by smuggling."

"Ah, true, I remember now, I did make a mistake. I said smuggling; I ought to have said slave-dealing. They tell me you are an old captain of a slaver on the coast of Africa."

"My lord, it is true my time has been spent at sea, but it was spent in industry, and I did not expect to have met, in such a place as this, with the ignorant slanders of common report. If that is to be the standard of character, my lord, but few of us will escape."

"Well, you may escape out of this room as fast as you like."

"Will not your lordship kindly grant my request, and recommend my boy to mercy?"

"No, I will see you [——] first! Get out of the room, and do not take up my time."

"I go, my lord; good morning: and I thank your lordship for your gentlemanly courtesy, and the polite breeding with which you receive the poor in your lordly dwelling."

The Marquis of Hardheart clenched his hand, and looked round his desk, as if for something to hurl at the head of the offender; but the back of the latter was already turned to his lordship; and in another second he had closed the door, and left the harsh and impetuous peer alone to resume his labours.

Going back to the village, old Mills communicated to his son the total want of success he had encountered; and, bidding him put on his hat, they both walked over to the neighbouring town, to engage the services of an attorney, and take the necessary steps for securing counsel to defend the case.

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Since the day of which we write, the town of Stafford has acquired a degree of interest as little to be expected as it was deeply to be mourned, by the sudden death, upon its judgment-seat, of the amiable and gentle Judge Talfourd.

If there is one town in the world at which a man would be loath to die, and still more loath to live, that town is Stafford.

Stafford is chiefly distinguished in trade by the manufacture of shoes.

Whether the shoemakers have had an eye to their own trade, I know not; but the whole town is paved with a nasty little pebble, on which it is extremely painful to walk.

It is built on a flat, level, marshy piece of ground, intersected by the meanderings of a small river called the Sow—dignified by the name of a river, it is true, but, in reality, little better than a mere brook. So slight is the elevation of the town of Stafford above this meandering stream, that it possesses little or no drainage; and, until very lately, there was scarcely a single house in the town of Stafford with any other sanitary accommodation than that abominable excuse for this great aid to health, a cesspool.

With the exception of a few solicitors, a physician, and one or two of the better class of tradesmen, there are no resident gentry in the town of Stafford. The shops are in the most miserable order; and, for a county town, nothing more disgraceful to English progress and intelligence can be found in the country.

If you want a *Times* newspaper, the very first want among an enlightened people, there is not a shop that can supply it. You must walk a mile to the railway-station for it.

If you want a recently-published book, there is not a library where it is to be found.

The whole aspect of the place is debased and horrid, while at the assizes the calendars are overburdened with criminals ranging in number between 100 and 200, and displaying every enormity under the sun of which man can be guilty, from murder downwards. There is nothing of guilt displayed by human records, from the days when the Cities of the Plain were

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overthrown till now, that Stafford does not produce samples of in redundance at every assizes.

In order that everything may be in keeping in the town of Stafford, this borough is noted in political annals as being one of the most corrupt places even in corrupt England; a large class of the freemen of the borough making it their pride and boast to sell their franchise at every election, with the least possible disguise, and at the utmost possible amount.

Whether from this general reproach of the state of Stafford the surrounding gentry, who ought to promote education and enlightenment, can be set free, you American citizens will decide for yourselves; but to this town on the —— day of —— 18—, the prisoner Mills and his father wended their way on the first day of the assizes, in order that the son might surrender to his bail and take his trial.

At the end of the first week the trial came on.

The counsel for the prosecution was the great Mr. Dolor, a gigantic man, with a most sepulchral voice: being a gentleman of large property himself, he was a magistrate in his own county; nothing, therefore, in his eyes, could exceed the atrocity of poaching.

The counsel for the defence was Mr. Serjeant Allwise, an accomplished and clever advocate, a beautiful speaker, and a humorous cross-examiner.

As not the slightest doubt existed from the facts of the case, there was in reality little or no defence to be made; but the serjeant having taken in vain one or two technical objections to the indictment, was fain to try and cross-examine the witnesses, so as to raise a little laugh and propitiate the jury to take a good-humoured view of the case.

The moment the laugh was heard, the learned judge, Baron Grim, thundered out in his harsh voice—

"Silence in the court!" Then looking at the gallery where the laughers sat, "I'll clear that gallery if I hear the laugh repeated."

Undeterred by this threat, Serjeant Allwise made a witty address to the jury, and the laugh was repeated more than once, but the Baron Grim did not think fit to make good his words.

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At last, however, the serjeant concluded, and it came to the baron's turn to speak. No one laughed then. He left the case so decidedly to the jury, that without turning round in the box, they brought in a verdict of guilty.

The baron, looking upon the unfortunate prisoner with the ferocity of something between a vulture and a turkey-cock, decked out as he was in his red robes, proceeded to pass sentence.

"Prisoner at the bar,—I find that in this county it is highly necessary to make examples of such men as you. Here you are, the son of a person in good circumstances, going out armed at night for the pursuit of game. You are found with a loaded gun, for the purpose, no doubt, of aiding in the capture of the property of others; and though not committing any violence yourself, yet, with a deadly weapon in your possession, ready if need be, no doubt, to use that deadly weapon for any purposes to which it can be put. Nothing is more common in this county, I find, than for scenes of violence and bloodshed to arise out of crimes like yours. The Legislature has, very properly, visited such an offence with a heavy punishment. You stand there liable to be transported for fourteen years; and though the court, in the exercise of its discretion, will not inflict upon you the full penalty to which you are liable,—it will still make an example of a young person in the prime of life who ought to be getting his bread by honest industry, and whose parents are above all the temptations of want. The sentence of the court upon you, therefore, is, that you be transported beyond the seas to such place as her Majesty, by and with the advice of her Privy Council, may think fit to appoint, for the term of seven years."

A deep silence overspread the court in an instant, when this harsh and severe sentence was pronounced. Silence was instantly, however, disturbed by the loud scream of an unhappy woman, who fainted away in the middle of the court at this terrible announcement of forcible separation from one who was her only hope in life.

The woman who uttered that piercing scream and then sank down in a fainting-fit was Annie Mills, the wife of the prisoner, who, unknown to him, or to her father-in-law, had risen from

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ner sick bed, and come into Stafford, very imprudently, to hear the trial of one who was everything to her.

The prisoner turned round when he heard this cry, and, in addition to all his own agony for himself, he beheld, at a little distance from him in the court, his sick wife lying fainting in the arms of the surrounding strangers; while, alas! he was beyond the power of succouring her—crowded round with spikes of iron, and securely guarded by strong gaolers!

Those few irrevocable words which he had heard from the judgment-seat had as effectually severed him from her whom he most desired to cherish as if the stern fiat of the grave itself had placed a gulf between them.

Pressing him down into the subterranean cell, the gaolers hurried him off back to his prison, and the wife of his bosom was doomed never again to know the shelter of that tender resting-place—never again to greet his eyes while life should beam within them!

O merciful laws! O exquisite country of England! O gentle administration of the state power for the good of the people! O Christian country, so ready to follow up the precepts of those divine lips which tell us, "By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another!" Here, look at it, Englishmen! Boastful, critical English! look at this exquisite picture of love from a paternal Government to its erring children! O faultless country! that, by its own perfection in the administration of the laws, has so great a right to find fault with and criticise a sister state, what do you say to it? Do you dare to deny it? Alas! you know too well that it is underdrawn!

As soon as the bereaved wife could be carried out of court, the fresh air revived her; but when she awoke to a full consciousness of the loss she had sustained, one fainting-fit succeeded another. At last she implored to be carried to the prison, to see her husband.

This was done, as far as her friends could do it. The authorities of the prison, however, informed her that she could not be admitted without an order from the justices. The unhappy woman had had quite enough of justice for that day, and, des-

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pairing of having such a request granted if made, her father-in-law took her back to his home.

The agitation and shock she had undergone soon produced its natural consequence—premature confinement; and, after giving birth to a still-born child, the mother in a few weeks followed it to the grave, leaving behind, her father-in-law Mills, and his daughter, now about seventeen.

As for the unfortunate convict, from the county gaol of Stafford he was removed to the Penitentiary at Millbank, near Westminster—thence to one of the British convict-hulks at a sea-port. There, with an iron round his leg and his grey cloth dress, he seemed as completely lost to his family as if another globe had intervened between them.

There are some blows in this world beneath which it is better almost to break than to bend.

The wretched wife, annihilated by the misfortune which had overtaken her, had found a refuge in the grave, and, it is to be hoped, in that happier state which is promised hereafter; but the miserable father, who had always looked forward to having his age cheered by the society of his stalwart son, now found himself in the most desolate part of life, not only left alone without any male relative, but placed in a position of shame. He had never been accustomed to indulge much in the companionship of other men of his own class, and now a morbid feeling of degraded circumstances raised a barrier between him and his fellows. A young girl of seventeen could ill supply the place of the associate he had lost in his ill-fated boy; and she unfortunately was, by the tendency of her own mind, little calculated to fill up in her father's household the void left by her more experienced sister-in-law.

Lucy Mills was the village beauty. She had many suitors, and it was upon these that her thoughts ran rather than upon her household duties. So long as her brother was at home he kept a vigilant eye upon her proceedings, in which he was much assisted by his wife; but when both these safeguards were removed, no impediment remained to the gratification of her vanity, and, like many of her class, she thought she could never attract a swain sufficiently high in station to adorn her con-

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quests. Unfortunately, as is also often the case, she selected the most dangerous as her favoured admirer. This was the young squire, as he was called, of a neighbouring mansion, the eldest son of a Mr. Cuthbert Findlay, who, having made all his money as a wholesale grocer, found it necessary to elevate his position by purchasing a commission for his eldest son in a heavy dragoon regiment.

In this intellectual position the son remained until he had obtained his captaincy. He then thought himself sufficiently genteel for the rest of his life—liked being called Captain Cuthbert, and the paternal grocer recalled him to the lately-purchased hall in Staffordshire, and, having displayed a sufficient amount of toadyism to the Lord Lieutenant, Captain Cuthbert Findlay speedily figured in the commission of the peace as a magistrate.

Had his exploits proceeded to no more dangerous extent, it would have been well for the peace of the village of Deer-Glen; but as the captain also attended the country church, he soon espied in her finery, ribbons, and brooches, the blooming face of Lucy Mills.

How the acquaintance was formed, matters little. Such an effort of military strategy was no doubt at the fingers' ends of the gallant officer.

But a few evenings after his first seeing her in church, Captain Findlay and Miss Mills were seen walking very lovingly in the hanging wood; and six weeks after that, when her aged father returned one evening to supper, he found neither supper nor child, for the latter had gone off, leaving a note behind her, stating that she was gone to marry the object of an eternal attachment.

This object was not at the moment discoverable, but a few weeks afterwards old Mills was enabled to trace his daughter to London. He found her residing in an elegant villa in St. John's Wood, under the name of Mrs. Smith, Mr. Smith being no less a personage than Captain Cuthbert Findlay, justice of the peace.

As to the marriage: that existed only in the empty promise which had been made to the deluded victim.

Forsaken by her lover, in the course of twelve months sh

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found her way back to her father's door—was sternly denied admittance, and, after a short career of infamy, died in St. George's Hospital, at the corner of Hyde Park, from whence the authorities of that building summoned the wretched father to her death-bed.

At the last moment, full of agony and remorse at his own anger—natural as it was to feel, but reprehensible as it was to follow—poor old Mills hastened up to London just in time to receive the last sighs of his repentant and once lovely child, and, having followed her remains to Highgate cemetery, came back to Deer-Glen, to madden over the recollection of the past, and to nurse in the deepest recesses of a sullen but impatient temperament the thirst for vengeance.

We mention these melancholy facts thus briefly because, though necessary to be related, they do not form such a portion of our tale as to require that they should be dwelt upon at length.

The morning after old Mills returned to the village in this desperate state of mind, unable to find any comfort beside his degraded and desolate hearth, he took his stick, and, locking his cottage as he left, turned out of doors to see if he could draw from the soothing face of Nature some consolation in the agonised state of feeling that raged within.

Through the centre of Lord Hardheart's park, as we have already stated, ran a public footpath.

As old Mills passed through the church-yard, he, like his son on a previous occasion, halted at this melancholy memorial of human instability. It was natural that, suffering under the repeated blows that had descended upon his head, he should look at those quiet grass-grown mounds, and almost sigh for the repose that might be found beneath them.

But had his past life been one which would allow him to contemplate, without dread, the awful approaches of the grave? That was the question. Perhaps this question occupied his mind at this moment, for, seeking out the tomb of his poor daughter-in-law, Annie, he stood over it for many minutes; then, resuming his path through the gateway, he walked down over the bridge that crossed the lake, and ascended the park on the

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opposite side towards the memorable cedar-copse, so fatal to his son.

Near this copse was one of the gateways of the park. No lodge was placed at this gateway. The gate was kept locked, and when Lord Hardheart and his family drove through it, the coachman always brought the key with him. On the gate was raised a stile, so that pedestrians coming by the footpath could mount over it.

As old Mills approached this gate he saw that some one was sitting on the stile, but was too much engrossed by his own misery to pay much attention as to who the solitary individual might be. A sudden turn of the path brought him close to the gate, and then, for the first time, he found himself within a few inches of Lord Hardheart. Since the day on which he had petitioned his lordship so unsuccessfully for his son, Mills had always avoided the marquis. Some instinctive dread of what might take place seemed to have kept him out of his lordship's way. Mills knew himself to be a man of ungovernable temper when aroused, and prudently kept temptation at a distance.

On seeing the peer, the blood mounted into the old man's face. The remembrance of all his wrongs rushed through his heart, and, while he felt himself trembling with excitement, after a momentary pause he sufficiently mastered himself to resolve on silence, and had already put his hand out to mount the gate a few feet from the point where Lord Hardheart was sitting, and to pass away.

At this moment some unfortunate impulse induced his lordship to put a match to the magazine, and, by a single observation, produce an explosion of all the wrath which the old man had been endeavouring to smother.

In after days, when Lord Hardheart recounted the story, he always alleged that he meant in kindness the remark to which he gave utterance; but whether such an assertion can be believed depends upon the construction which each man may place upon the relative position of the two individuals, and the nature of the remark itself.

"Well, Mills," said the marquis, with a curl of his lip, "how is your son?"

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"How is my son!" repeated the old man, staggering as if some one had struck him; then instantly withdrawing his hand from the gate he was about to cross, and coming close up to his lordship's person with all the air of one seeking a death-struggle, "You infernal, murdering villain! how dare you ask the father you have made childless how his son is? How dare you to talk to me of my son, when you, for your own selfish indulgence and gamekeeping spirit, first put a snare in my child's path, and then would accept of no repentance or propitiation until you had made him a convict, and driven him away from all the ties and duties of home, to wither seven years of his life in the most abject captivity, for an offence that did not even amount to the slaying of a pheasant! How is my son, do you ask? Why don't you ask me how his broken-hearted, murdered, and buried wife is? Why don't you ask how my defiled and polluted daughter is? Why don't you ask for a flower or two from the grave of the girl who, missing the care of her brother, has been seduced away by one of your brother magistrates? Why limit your inquiries to my son, you bloodless-hearted villain?" And the old man clutched his cudgel as if he longed to throw all discretion to the wind, and lay his stick soundly over the proud aggressor's back.

"Fellow!" said Lord Hardheart, with all the cool contempt he could infuse into his manner, "do not reproach me with what has happened to your son. Go and reproach him with it, and then reproach yourself that you did not bring him up to respect the law."

"The law! *I* not respect the law! You base, unmanly liar! Are you a fellow to talk to me? Are you to call me 'fellow,' standing of right upon English ground as good a man as yourself, though not a titled one? Are you to talk to me of respect to the law—you, who defy it in your own house, and trample upon it whenever you choose—you that I could summon any day, if there were such a thing as justice in Great Britain, before your brother offenders and brother magistrates, for sending poor bleeding and bruised infants to climb your narrow, crooked chimneys, at the risk of their lives, in defiance

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of the law! You titled but pitiless ruffian! Disgrace to the peerage that you are! Shall you taunt me with not bringing up my child to respect the law, when you live in open defiance of it whenever you choose, or your own convenience or selfishness suggests it to you to do so; and only preach obedience to it when your own selfishness requires that it shall protect your enjoyments and your luxuries, your sporting and your game? I spit at you and your cant! Aye! you may scowl and look crestfallen. You know you richly deserve the truths I am telling you—base coward that you are, relying on the immunity of your lawlessness, because you know you are the judge to administer the law, and that none of your brother magistrates would dare to have the courage to do justice upon you, even if I informed against you."

"Get about your business, you contemptible old hound!" replied the marquis, adding, in addition, a string of oaths that would be impossible to pen. "Who cares for your son? or your daughter? or your daughter-in law? or what becomes of them? Such a stock as yours, you slave-dealing scoundrel, was sure to come to harm. What could you expect else? Think of your past life. Whatever fate they may have met with is no more than you have deserved."

"Am I a slave-dealing old scoundrel?" retorted Mills, swearing in his turn. "I'll make you think of your words for many a bitter day to come. Am I punished as I deserve? Who are you? And what is your mean, dastardly, oppressive conduct towards every being around—who hates and despises you, marquis though you are—that you talk to me of what I have deserved! And shall you be allowed to lie in your grave yet, do you think, without meeting what *you* deserve, you game-preserving, rabbit-skin selling, mean, despicable tyrant? Don't think, whatever your rank is, that you stand so high that old John Mills won't reach you yet if he lives; and, when you know the bitterness and the emptiness of heart you have brought on me, think of this day. When you are ground to the dust with woe and misery, and there is no hand so powerful on earth as to be able to lift you up—when the hope that

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you have most cherished in all your life is irrevocably blasted and ruined, and there is no drug that can give you a night's rest—when the whole sky of your life is black with clouds and darkness, and the spring of day can never lighten your torment and your gloom—then think of the old man you have outraged and driven to despair, and know that he has contrived it for you."

Another string of curses followed this speech, and Lord Hardheart jumped from his seat on the stile, and approached old Mills with uplifted fist.

"Aye!" cried out the old man. "Strike! strike! Just give me the chance of a single blow; and, as my soul lives, I'll not leave your body till I send you down to the lowest pit!"

In an instant back flew the knotted shilalagh of Mills, and there was a demon in his eye that made Lord Hardheart pause a moment before he exposed himself to a contest with so desperate an antagonist, old as he was.

At this moment the sound of footsteps and voices were audible in the copse which traversed the road through it towards the gate.

"Here, Southern! Southern!"

Scarcely had Lord Hardheart uttered these words when a couple of dogs, recognising his voice, bounded forward to his feet. Some men running were heard. Two of his gamekeepers stood beside him.

"Now, then, you infernal old rascal!" cried Lord Hardheart, swearing vehemently, "repeat before these men the threats you have uttered."

But old Mills was not to be caught in that way. He was quite as knowing as his lordship.

"I utter threats, my lord?" in an instant said the old man, with a tone of infinite respect. "Your lordship, surely, is joking. I would not presume, my lord, to utter any threats to your lordship. It is you, my lord, who have been swearing so at me. I am sure your keepers must have heard you, my lord," with another profound bow. Then, turning to the keepers, "It is very hard for a poor man to bear all this cursing and swearing, and I wonder that a gentleman can go on in this

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way who goes to church every Sunday, and is a magistrate upon the bench. But, as it comes from a lord, all must be taken in this free and happy country, though, some day, my lord, God may requite you." As old Mills said this, he raised his hat respectfully from his head, made his lordship a profound bow, and at once began to get over the stile which his lordship had quitted.

The passion of the marquis seemed redoubled at this skilful *ruse* of the old man.

"You infernal, hypocritical old blackguard! I have a good mind to break every bone in your body." Then, again, out came another volley of oaths, which few lips, unless well practised in such reprehensible indulgences, could utter.

Old Mills never took the least notice of this except to walk quietly away, muttering, "Hard to bear! hard to bear!" while Lord Hardheart, utterly baffled, turned to his gaping gamekeepers who stood by, not knowing what to make of the discrepancy between his lordship's account, and the facts their senses had witnessed.

CHAPTER IV.

When the Marquis of Hardheart retired to his dressing-room that day, to go through his toilet for dinner, he thought over his interview with Mills. He felt extremely puzzled at the conduct of the man altogether. Engrossed in a thousand and one matters of importance connected with his estate, he had never chosen to consider what extreme ruin he had brought upon the villager, by his relentless prosecution of his son.

On his way home from the cedar-copse with his keepers, he had made some inquiries about the old man's family; and, it must be confessed, stern as he was, some little feeling, almost approaching compunction made itself felt in his heart: but it was only for an instant. He had so accustomed himself all his life to trample on everybody's feelings, without thought of their sufferings, in the attainment of his own plans, that he felt quite surprised when he reflected on the ferocious spirit which old Mills had exhibited. One thing was quite clear, the old man

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was nursing a spirit of revenge against him—but had he the power of making it felt?

The peer's first intention was to have taken legal proceedings against Mills for his language; but when he reflected that he himself had used language still more strong, though different in its threatening nature, a sense of what was due to his dignity interfered. Then, again, although old Mills had threatened him, he could not condescend, for a moment, to think it possible that a man in Mills' position, however much he wished it, could, in reality, effect any injury to one in his lordship's sphere. This, combined with a feeling of the ridicule to which he might be exposed in his own circle for entertaining any apprehension of such a person's vindictiveness, induced him at last to dismiss the matter from his mind, as one of those ruffled rose-leaves which will occasionally intrude upon the couch of Dives, but which are best met by a speedy dismissal from the mind.

At any rate, he resolved to sleep upon it before taking any step in the matter, and the following morning after breakfast, as he strolled out into the park with his cigar, he once more cogitated over what would be the most fitting path to pursue. The morning's reflection led him to the same conclusion as the evening's cogitations, namely, to leave the old man to his course, and think no more of him; and as he turned back to the house with this impression, he encountered his architect, who had just come down with a roll of plans to submit to his lordship, for some new improvements at the Hall.

Where is there a man with a balance at his banker's who can look coolly on an architect? Where is there a man who, having money to pay for bricks and mortar, can encounter a proposition for dabbling in them without delight? Longitude may be found, but such a man, never. Lord Hardheart had this weakness of human nature strong in him.

"Come to the library," said the peer, while the disciple of Vitruvius stood hat in hand. Going together into the house, they were soon deep in the question of ædification.

Deer-Glen Hall was an old building, and most men would have been very well content to have kept it as it now stood, provided only the ways and means were not wanting for the

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occupation of so large a house; but Lord Hardheart's sensitive eye had long been offended with the several stacks of chimneys that in the good old times had been brought forward to the front elevation. True it was that they matched exceedingly well with the antique gables. True it also was, that as chimneys they were beautifully turreted and ornamented, and to a person of the least taste would have been as little in danger of coming down as any other part of the Hall. True it also was, that they answered admirably the purpose for which all chimneys should be built—that, namely, of carrying off with a swift draught the smoke destined to pass through them.

No house in the neighbourhood, even in the highest winds, was so little afflicted with the nuisance of smoke, while the interiors of most of the flues were so large that a full-grown man could with ease climb and clean them, and scarcely any alteration from the perpendicular had been made in their construction; but all this was insufficient to please Lord Hardheart. He must needs have his chimneys put entirely out of sight at the back of the Hall; and although warned by the architect that he would incur a great expense in so doing, and render his chimneys moreover exceedingly difficult to sweep, and more liable to smoke, still, with the usual obstinacy of the man's character, he persisted in bearing down all opposition, and carrying out his own unwise intentions.

In the case of one particular room he had added a chimney and a fireplace for himself; and badly as it was done, he being his own architect, he was so delighted with the exercise of his skill as to insist upon following it up to a great extent.

"Now, before I look at these plans, Mr. Doyley, have you followed my instructions minutely? because, if you have not, I will not waste my time in going into them."

"Oh, yes, my lord, I have followed them to the letter; but remember, Lord Hardheart, I do not guarantee that they will draw without smoking when the wind is high."

"Oh, I will guarantee that. I am sure they will never smoke."

"And remember, my lord, unless you put in soot-doors, you will have to get them all cleaned by children, which is a violation of the Act of Parliament."

"The Act of Parliament be ——!" said his lordship, with

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an oath. "No Acts of Parliament exist in Deer-Glen, except when I utter them."

The architect made no reply to this observation, but, unrolling his plans upon the library-table, placed a letter weight on each corner, in order that his lordship might inspect them at his leisure.

"What are these?" said the marquis, pointing with his finger to some square black patches in the plans.

"Those, my lord, are the soot-doors required by the Act of Parliament to be inserted whenever the angle of the chimney is made less obtuse than 120 degrees."

"A fiddle, I tell you, for the Act of Parliament! Put your pencil through every one of those soot-doors directly. I am not going to have any soot-doors in my house."

"But, my lord, surely we must obey the laws."

"I am the law in my house."

"Yes; but, my lord, you are not the law out of your house, and I am liable as an architect to be punished by a fine for constructing a chimney without a soot-door where the angle is less obtuse than the Act requires."

"Oh, I will bear you harmless."

"But, my lord, has your lordship considered what may be the result? If you have these chimneys that you propose, you will have two angles in them, each of 90 degrees. They must be swept by children if you have no soot-doors, because they are so small; and if a child arrives at the second angle on his returning from the top of the chimney, he will find that second angle entirely filled with soot, and, kicking his way back through that, the probability is that the child will get imbedded in the chimney and lose its life."

"Oh, stuff! that sort of philanthropy is quite the cant of the day, and is perfectly sickening. These little beggars who sweep our chimneys are only about seven or eight years old; they do not require much room to pass through, and they are brought up to it. They think nothing of sweeping a dozen such chimneys every day—they must look out for themselves."

"On the contrary, my lord. In practice we find they cannot look out for themselves, for they are constantly being stuck

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fast and killed in chimneys of this construction. You see, my lord, in sweeping a long chimney of ninety or a hundred feet, the whole of the soot of a perpendicular ascent of thirty or forty feet must fall down and lodge at the first flat. The only mode the child has of getting that soot away to the next angle in his descent is, by kicking it before him with his feet. In doing this, the soot often gets impacted into a hard mass; and in turning round these sharp angles, the little creature, with a cap drawn over its head, and the left hand in a manner pinned to its side, and the other hand extended with a brush above its cap, is very easily jammed so fast as to become speedily stifled; then you have to cut through your brickwork at a great expense, disfiguring the room where the accident may occur, to say nothing of the coroner's jury and the very serious consequences that may ensue, and the remarks of the press."

"Pack of stuff and fiddlestick! D—n the press!—an impertinent set of anonymous nobodies. You architects are always seeing difficulties."

"But why not put a soot-door, my lord? because that would be put in the chimney outside upon the roof. That will obviate all danger of the child's life; it will only cost seven shillings, and the soot can be brought out there, where it will dirty nothing and be in no one's way."

"I tell you I will not have it, Mr. Doyley—a pack of chimney-sweepers tramping out upon the leads of my house with great nails in their shoes, breaking slates, making cracks in the lead, letting in the water when it rains, giving perpetual journeys to the servants to run after plumbers a couple of miles to the next town."

"Well, my lord, then put a soot-door in some of the attics or servants' bed-rooms."

"I will not have any soot-doors at all; I hate your soot-doors. I have done without them in the chimneys I have built; and if you cannot do without them, why, I will build these chimneys myself."

At this moment his lordship's steward knocked at the library-door, and, being told to come in, announced something in a low tone of voice in his lordship's ear.

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"Oh, I am very glad of that; that is just the very thing. He has just come in time. Here, Mr. Doyley, you are in luck's way; the chimney-sweeper has just come to sweep the chimney I spoke of. You know I built it to my muniment-room. Come down with me now, I will show you how far your Act of Parliament runs in my own castle."

His lordship, taking a bright key from a reading-table, left the library, and descended with the steward to the basement floor below, whither the architect followed him.

On arriving at this floor, Mr. Doyley found a master chimney-sweeper, a horrid-visaged fellow, waiting with his son, a miserable-looking boy, begrimed in soot from top to toe; his clothes, as usual, in rags, and his knees covered with sores from the number of chimneys which he was compelled to climb.

"This way," said his lordship, stepping onward, until he paused at an iron door; and having unlocked this, his lordship entered, the architect after him, and the two chimney-sweeps bringing up the rear.

The architect looked around him, and found himself in a room of moderate size, the walls of which displayed the marks of the brickwork simply coated over with whitewash, while the floor was made of Yorkshire stone, covered over with cocoa-nut-fibre carpet; the ceiling was arched over with bricks, and the sides were lined round with iron stands, on which were placed various metal deed-boxes, most of them showing Bramah's patent lock, and all of them labelled with gilt letters and numerals indicative of the parchments they held, and bearing reference to some private memorandum in his lordship's keeping.

"Here, Doyley, this is my muniment-room. I found it a sort of lumber cellar when I came to the estate, and no fireplace in it; but as I often had to refer to these boxes, and it was very troublesome having them carried up and down stairs, and as they are always liable to fire when left in the library, I built this fireplace and chimney, put down the cocoa-nut matting, put in this easy-chair and those other chairs and writing-table; so that, when my steward comes to me upon business requiring these papers, I receive him here. Now, this boy is going to sweep this chimney, you will see; and as I never allow this

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room to be entered except when I am present, I always come myself during the operation. Take a chair."

Doyley did as he was requested, and remained looking round the room, while the elder sweep, having put his son into the chimney, fastened up the cloth, and sat down upon the hearth.

"Now, this chimney," said Lord Hardheart, taking out his watch, "has two right angles in it, and a dead flat of forty feet, and yet you will find that that little urchin who has gone up will sweep it without the slightest difficulty in something under half-an-hour."

"Well, my lord," said the architect, with a shrug of the shoulders, "I would rather you would send him up one of your chimneys than I send him up one of mine."

A flash of indignation passed through the eyes of the marquis as he heard these words, but he did not resent them by any of those bursts of passion which he generally showed, for the architect in question was a man of great celebrity, having a country-seat in the county; he was very full of business, and it was difficult at all times to get at him. He was a man making an income, if report could be believed, considerably larger than the clear revenue of the marquis after the interest on all his mortgages had been paid. He was, therefore, in a sufficiently independent position to be able to speak his mind, and sufficiently honourable in mind not to hesitate in denouncing wrong merely because the wrong was harboured in high places.

"Why, what makes you so meally-mouthed about the matter?"

"Why, my lord, in the first place I am not a peer, nor a legislator, nor even a magistrate, and, therefore, I think it my duty to respect the laws of the country, by which I am able to secure my own income and enjoy my own liberty."

"Oh, laws! Good laws, of course, everybody respects; but if people will make such ridiculous laws as these about chimney-sweeping, how can Parliament expect that anyone will be fool enough to do anything but violate them?"

"Well, my lord, I cannot see that they are ridiculous at all; look at that poor little urchin who has just gone up this chimney

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—what a tender age he is. How old is your son, my man?" addressing the master sweep.

"Seven, next May, sir," said the man.

"There, my lord, just look at that. Here is an urchin at such a tender age that your child, when he comes to that period of life, will still be in the nursery; yet is this poor infant, for he is no better, compelled to execute this loathsome work, hard even for a man, and at the risk of his life, while his great hulking father here sits down upon the hearth, perfectly idle, or doing a work which is not even child's work, and which certainly any child might manage—that, namely, of holding the laps of that cloth together. Now, my lord, of these poor children at this moment, in England and Wales alone, there are no less than four thousand—all of them following this most debasing and degraded calling, that of gathering the soot of chimneys, which is infinitely better done by a machine; and, out of that four thousand, the proportion of those who can write and read is one *per cent*!* It is a lasting disgrace to England that such a mass of children should be systematically brought up in utter ignorance, and destitute of all protection."

"Oh, nonsense, Mr. Doyley; how can anyone be destitute of protection in England when we are all protected by the law?"

"My lord, how can these poor children be protected by the law, when they are all employed in defiance of it by men who are breaking the law in employing them?"

His lordship bit his lips at this remark, and seemed much confused.

"At any rate, they are protected by their own friends and parents."

"A pretty protection that amounts to, my lord, when you see this great brutal fellow, the parent of this infant; and yet he has devoted him to this work, and now sends him up your lordship's chimney at this very moment, at the risk of his life."

"Well, some one must do the work."

"Nay, my lord, that is just the point at issue; that is the

* See Speech of the Earl of Shaftesbury in the House of Lords, on moving the second reading of the Chimney Sweepers' Amendment Bill, Session 1854.

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very fact which utterly condemns the system. Nobody need do the work of climbing chimneys, because, by using machinery and putting in soot-doors, children are wholly unneeded."

"Well, for the life of me, I cannot see where is the hardship of sending a child up a chimney that he climbs and cleans in some thirty minutes."

"Ah! my lord," said the architect, laughing, "there is an old adage, 'There are none so blind as those who will not see'—but, at any rate, here is something very pleasant to see."

At this moment the door, which had been imperfectly closed, was burst open, and in dashed a little boy, with light brown curling hair falling with the utmost profusion upon his shoulders—the rich point lace collar well vandyked around his neck being beautifully relieved by the dark-blue velvet tunic over which it lay.

"O Willie, I have been looking for you everywhere," said the child, running forward to the marquis, and climbing up on his knee with the well-assured boldness of one who was perfectly confident of the welcome he would receive and the amount of liberty he might take.

"Have you, sir?" said the father, passing his hand over the rich curls, and imprinting a kiss on his forehead.

"Yes, I have; and, do you know, a packing-case has come down from London with my toys, but the butler won't let it be opened, because it is directed, Willie, to you."

"Well, I will come up and see to it presently."

"Why cannot you come now, Willie?"

"Because I am waiting here until a little boy comes down the chimney, and as soon as he comes down we will all go away together."

"Up the chimney!" said the child, opening his eyes. "What is he doing up the chimney?"

"Well, he has gone up the chimney to sweep it and make it clean, and bring the soot down."

"But how big is the little boy?"

"Well, he is a little bigger than you."

"And how old is he?"

"Well, he is nearly seven years old."

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"Is he only seven years old? Are you seven years old, Willie?"

"Yes, unfortunately, and a great deal more."

"But it is very naughty of you, Willie, to send a little boy up the chimney to sweep it. Aunt Mary told me so when I was in London the other day."

"Pooh! pooh! your Aunt Mary is always telling you some nonsense or another. Hark, here is the little boy coming down."

The sound of his descending brush was now heard over the chimney-piece. In a few minutes the descending soot was seen bulging out of the cloth at the bottom.

The assembled witnesses drew back a little way to be out of the reach of the dirty particles. The child's voice was then heard inside the chimney, and in a few seconds the little sweep stood himself upon the hearth.

The marquis' son, the little Earl of Hopemore, started back half frightened, when he beheld this unusual figure, throwing off the cap from his head. Running forward, the young earl cried—

"Oh, oh! look! look! Hurt his knee! hurt his knee!" pointing to the streaming blood, as it trickled down the legs of the little chimney-sweeper from the mass of sores and festerings around the knee. As the little child looked at it he burst into tears, and ran crying back to his father, "O Willie! Willie! look at his knee!"

"Wipe your knee, Bill," said the father, in a gruff, savage voice.

The little sweep passed his hand over the blood that had frightened the child, and then wiped it on the more sooty part of his person.

"What a little goose you are to be frightened in that way!" said the marquis. "Dry your tears, and I will go up, and open your box of toys."

"What is your name, my little man?" said the architect, touched by the child's good feeling, and holding out his hand to the marquis's heir, as he still remained gazing at the poor sweep-boy, with a view of distracting his attention, and turning his thoughts.

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"My name is 'Statius," said the child.

"He does not know his name," said the marquis; "he is not three years old yet. He means Eustatius; but, however, that knowledge, like the rest, will come in time, I dare say. Now, Tot, my boy, let the sweeps pass out with the soot, and we will go up to your toys."

CHAPTER V.

In a few minutes more the muniment-room was locked; and having ascended the hall-stairs, the marquis and the architect, and the young earl, stood beside a noble case of toys which the munificence of one of the child's relations had sent down.

In Totty's eagerness to behold the expected treasures, he caught up the pointed knife of the gardener, which lay beside the case, to cut a part of the cord that bound it. Before his father could take the dangerous instrument from the child's hands, the blade slipped over the rolling knot; and, with the force of the blow, struck the child just above the knee, dividing his clothes, and inflicting a large gash in the superior muscle.

Knowing that he had done wrong, poor Totty was able to master his pain so as not to cry out; but, in a few seconds, forth gushed the blood in such abundance as to show through all his clothes; and then becoming frightened, this, added to the temporary loss of blood, caused him to utter a sharp scream and faint away.

"See, see," cried the marquis, "the child has injured himself. "What is it—a knife?"

In an instant the architect and the father sprung to the child's side, and bore him to the dining-room.

"Calm yourself, mylord," said Doyley, turning back the clothes as they laid Totty on the table, and endeavoured to stanch the blood; "I do not think, from the position of the wound, that any serious blood-vessel is injured."

"To think that such a wound as this!" cried the marquis, gazing in apprehension at the injured spot, "should be given in a moment, while we only moved round our heads. Saddle a couple of horses, some of you!" turning to the servants. "Ride over

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for Dr. Spurgin. Wherever you find him, mount him on one of the horses, and bring him back quickly. Better bring some brandy directly, and wet the child's lips. Does he revive, Doyley?"

"Yes, my lord, I think this is only a slight matter. You see I have already stopped the blood by a little pressure here."

The marquis carefully wiped away the blood with his handkerchief, saw that no real injury was inflicted, and then, becoming more calm, kissed the boy, and sat down by his head, moistening the little fellow's pale lips with weak brandy and water when the spirit was brought, till the child opened his eyes, and once more began to revive.

"Do not speak, Totty," said the marquis. "You are not hurt; do not be frightened. Doyley, what had better be done with that cut?"

"Well, my lord, I do not see that there is much harm done, or that there is anything much the matter with it. If you have a little diachylon plaster in the house, I will cut it into slips and bring the lips of the wound together. My workmen often give themselves much worse gashes than this; and, with no other treatment than a little plaster and a bandage, they always come round—and, in some bad cases, we put a leaf of tobacco next to the wound."

In a few minutes one of Totty's nurses had found the requisite materials; and Doyley, calling for a candle, drew the edges of the wound together with strips of diachylon, put a gentle pressure round it, and, as he was tying the exterior bandage up, in walked Dr. Spurgin. On hearing what had happened, he undid the bandage that Doyley was tying, and looked at the mode in which the strapping had been put on. "Well, my lord," said the doctor, "I don't think I will remove this strapping. It seems very nicely done. It is a mere flesh wound, and you must take care that our little patient lies quiet for a couple of days. I will call again in an hour or two's time, after I have seen some patients in the village where your servants found me; and all will be well, I hope, by the end of the week. But you are not to move your leg, Master Totty. Remember that. How did it happen?"

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"I was cutting a knot, and it turned round."

"Well, I suppose you want to see your toys, do you not?"

"Oh, yes, very much," said Totty, attempting to rise on the table.

"No, no," said Spurgin, "a bargain is a bargain; you shall have all your toys brought to you; but you must lie quite quiet. Now, my lord, you order one of the mattresses to be brought down, and we will carry him up stairs upon it, and then his toys can be unpacked and taken to him, and as he lies on his bed he can amuse himself."

These directions having been carried out, the marquis saw that the child, engrossed by his playthings, showed little or no sense of harm; and the marquis's mind quieted on this, the great point of his existence, his lordship once more descended to the library, to discuss the business on which the architect had arrived.

"Now, then, Mr. Doyley, you see there is not the slightest difficulty in sweeping these chimneys without soot-doors; so show me what your estimates are for them."

"My lord, I hope you will reconsider this matter. I think it is a very frightful thing to be one among the number of individuals keeping up such a system."

"What system?"

"Why, the system of employing such poor infants as that one we saw below, to do work that can be much better done, after all, by machinery."

"Oh, fiddle-dee-dee, Doyley! you look too seriously at this matter."

"Well, my lord, I am afraid it is rather your lordship looks too lightly at it. Last winter, when a little cessation in our work enabled me to take a few months' holidays, I visited the United States; and if your lordship only heard the observations which were made in very high quarters there as to the continuance of this system in England—"

"Observations? what observations could they make?"

"Why, my lord, it is said in America that we cannot in England have the slightest pretence for claiming an exemption from slavery, while the nobility and magistracy of this country,

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as a general rule, are all fostering and keeping up the system of climbing-boys. It is well known in America that these children are most of them bought from their parents for a price, and money paid down, and are, to all intents and purposes, slaves in the truest sense of the word. They are not only bought for a price to work at a labour which brings them no reward, without the power of escape from it, the true test of slavery; but they are put to do work which is, all of it, of the same debasing and odious character, unvaried by any brighter employment, and which, from its dangerous and disgusting details, is said in America to be much worse than the generality of work to which slaves are put in the United States."

"Oh, curse the United States! A set of vulgar hounds! What do I care about the United States?"

"Well, my lord, we criticise very strongly their tolerance of slavery; and I think, before we do this, we ought to get rid of such a slavery at home as that of these poor children. It is all very well for a peer of Parliament to curse the Americans, and despise their opinions; but I am not in a position to do this. I am only a professional man, my lord. I have a character to maintain. I never have consented to construct illegal buildings; and I should not like to put it in the power of any jury, if a child were killed in one of these chimneys, to ask who was the architect, and my name to appear."

"What, then," said his lordship, reddening, "do you refuse to build these chimneys?"

"Well, my lord, I have no objection to build them as I have drawn them, which is in accordance with the laws of my country."

"Thank you, sir, for your condescension in coming here to teach me the laws. You may take back your plans."

"Thank you, my lord," said the architect, rising and bowing very politely—"I have no desire to deprive your lordship of your plans; they are now your property; you ordered them and I have delivered them, and whenever your lordship calls upon me to execute them I shall be happy to go forward with them."

"Then, sir, you may wait long enough," said the angry peer, with an oath.

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On hearing which the architect bowed in silence, turned round and left the room, leaving the plans lying on the table; and if every man had the courage and good sense to meet an illegal proposition in this way, how much of human misery and human guilt would be rendered impossible.

The marquis remained walking up and down the library a few minutes after the architect had left, looking out occasionally at the window to watch if the carriage of the latter drove away from the house.

In a few minutes wheels were heard, and presently the well-timed pair of horses of the celebrated Mr. Doyley, under the influence of that gentleman's whip and rein, dashed across the park towards the eastern lodge.

"Impertinent puppy!" muttered the marquis, as, snatching up the plans, he was about to dash them into the fire. After a minute's pause, however, he stayed his hand, and muttered, "No; I will not do that. As I have got the plans and specifications, and must pay for them, I suppose, I will carry them out myself in the way I please." Folding them up carefully, he put them away in a cupboard, and, ringing the bell, desired to know if the letter-bag had yet arrived from the post-office.

"No, my lord," said the servant; "the groom is now galloping across the park with it."

As soon as this welcome budget came to hand his lordship opened it, and, among other letters, found one from his house-agent, which was as follows:—

"My Lord,—I have communicated your offer of £200 for the season to the owners of the two houses you specified; but the owner of Brabazon House requires it to be taken for not less than a year certain. I have, therefore, taken the other house you named—Hampden House—and everything will be in readiness for your lordship to take possession on the 1st of May."

"Oh, very good!" muttered the marquis; "that settles the question of a residence during the session. So now I will make all my arrangements accordingly."

Having answered five letters, and transacted other business, the peer then ordered his horses and rode out.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE month of May had arrived at Deer-Glen.

Lord Hardheart, faithful to his own obstinacy, had adopted the plans of the architect; and though that honourable-minded man would not himself carry them out, his lordship did not scruple to do so. The offending chimneys had all been removed, and by the assistance of some convenient London builder the new and dangerous chimneys had been erected. No safety soot-doors had been inserted, but, in as perfect defiance of the law as if it had never been in existence, the contemplated number of chimneys had been carried to the back of the building, each of them having two right angles and a long dead flat in them; impracticable, therefore, to machinery, which cannot pass more than one right angle, they required to be swept by children, and were most dangerous to be done by them.

His lordship having given orders that the usual child should always be employed, the master sweep had taken the precaution of going outside the chimneys upon the roof, while his child was at work within, so that he might be ready to break into them and release his child whenever the danger of sticking fast should occur, as if it were possible that a suffocating child could in many cases be cut out before life was extinct! *

This spring work having been duly despatched, his lordship felt himself at liberty to enjoy the festivities of the season in London, and on the 20th of May removed with his son and servants to Hampden House.

As a memorable event in our story occurs at this residence, perhaps it may not be unwise to detain the reader for a few minutes while we describe the residence to which Lord Hardheart now removed.

In the reign of Charles the First, Colonel ——, a relation of the celebrated Earl of Warwick and Holland, built what in that reign was considered a very stately and elegant mansion near the magnificent residence of Vere, Earl of Oxford.

* See Lords' evidence in Appendix, Q. and A. 405.

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This residence was Hampden House.

It was built on some land which was purchased by Lord Oxford, and was still in his lordship's manor. The house was situated a few gunshots below Holland House, being almost opposite to it in a southerly direction. It might be a little more than half a mile distant, and, like that much larger mansion, Hampden House was surrounded by a considerable portion of land, of which, however, five acres only remained at the time of our story.

When the unfortunate Charles lost his head and Oliver Cromwell rose into the ascendant, Hampden House became the portion of a large heiress, Miss ——, the only daughter of Sir ——. This lady was wooed and won in marriage by Cromwell's celebrated General Lambert, who aspired to succeed his master in the protectorate, and but for Monk, the Duke of Albermarle, so nearly succeeded.

During the period that Lambert occupied Hampden House in right of his wife, Cromwell was a frequent visitor to its shady groves, Cromwell himself living at no great distance in a somewhat similar house, since pulled down, lying to the eastward and northward of Hampden House, in whose shady groves, amid all the shocks which overwhelmed the Constitution, bloomed green and luxurious as ever, many a stately tree, exquisite shrub, and charming flower; the gardens being sedulously cultivated by one tenant after another, as a delicious retreat from the noise and bustle of London.

There still survives to this day in the grounds of Hampden the Filbert Walk, where Oliver Cromwell pacing up and down, remarked to Lambert, with a grim smile—

"The silken Charles would little accuse us two of being nutting this day, some two miles and a half from his father's palace of St. James's."

In the same spot also still rears its head the old and shady cedar on the bank, beneath the boughs of which of a summer evening Cromwell and his general were used to sit discussing the weighty matters with the success or miscarriage of which their lives were unfortunately bound up.

As a guest of Lambert, it was occasionally the habit of Crom-

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well to pass the night at Hampden, and he appears to have made a rule of withdrawing in succession to several similar houses in the suburbs of London, to sleep in peace from the plots of those who were so anxious to terminate his days; for another mansion near London still exists, Loughborough House, in which Lord John Russell takes an interest through the Holland family, and in which Cromwell is said to have resided; but Loughborough House stands as completely at the opposite suburb to Hampden House as is possible: Hampden House being at the western verge of Old Brompton, on the Middlesex side of the Thames, and Loughborough House being in the suburb of Brixton, on the Surrey side of the Thames, a distance of seven or eight miles lying between them.

But Charles, like Cromwell, has gone to his account. Lambert has followed the bold usurper to the silence of the grave.

After the lapse of more than a century, lingered under the same cedar at Hampden, paced under the same thicket, another general, of younger and more patrician blood, of equal gallantry and more untimely end. Here, on the eve of Waterloo, sat and mused the ill-starred Ponsonby, while the proud and stately Lady Emily, his wife, watched with delight, sadly shaded with foreboding, the children climbing on Sir Frederick's knees; nor daring to believe that the idol of her tenderness was in a few days to pass from those tranquil bowers, to be trampled a lifeless corpse into the mire and carnage of the bloodiest and most fatal battle-field Napoleon ever knew. Yet so, alas! it was to be.

June of 1815 had scarcely numbered its earliest days before Lady Emily embraced her husband in farewell at Hampden-gate.

"Good bye, God bless you, Fred! Nobody shall come inside these gates till you return."

The gates were closed and locked that night.

"Soon," thought Lady Emily, "they shall be opened again with joy. In the meantime, I and all my household will use the postern entrance."

The 21st of June had hardly passed, when a messenger of woe, stopping at those very gates, bore to her the intelligence that Europe had achieved one of its greatest victories; but,

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alas for Lady Emily! what recked she that Buonaparte was overthrown by the Allies? Sir Frederick Ponsonby was among the slain, and the day of unlocking the fatal gate in this world was never to arrive for her. All the days of her life she never opened it, and under the same roof she mourned out her widowhood, and tasted, at last, the same dark slumber that wrapped Cromwell, and Lambert, and her husband in the tomb.

Soon after Lord Hardheart took possession of Hampden House, within those walls which had echoed to the voices of the great men we have mentioned was assembled a party to dinner, not numerous in its extent, but composed of personages the renown of some of whom will in future years be proclaimed, at least equal, if not superior, to any above named.

On his lordship's right hand sat "the" Duke, one of the most singular and wonderful men whom the annals of the world have chronicled. Of his character every one has formed his own opinion, and therefore we need occupy but little space in its discussion in these pages. But one point which has never been sufficiently dwelt on in the Duke's character we may here mention. Of all the human beings of whom any tale is narrated since the beginning of the world, I know not where to look for any similar instance of almost invariable prosperity. Griefs he must have had, or he could not have been human; but he contrived to keep them so hermetically sealed beneath the surface of his stoical calmness, that no human being was ever able to see where the deep wound lay.

On his lordship's left sat Lord Brilliant, a man in many points of mind and genius infinitely superior to the Duke, but in judgment and inflexibility of will as different as gold is from steel. Notwithstanding all the Duke's vast renown, he could hardly be called an entertaining companion, except in a very small circle of very intimate friends. Brilliant, wherever he was, became the life and soul of everything which delighted in fun or information—playful as a kitten, simple as a child. Withal, he was so wonderfully informed on almost every point, you could scarcely believe the man ever slept. A lifetime seemed too short to cram into one brain the inexhaustible world

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of subjects which he knew—not as a smatterer, but with an amount of knowledge that any other being but himself would have deemed the respectable result of years spent in study. A good deal of Lord Brilliant's conversation, it must be confessed, was not of a style or nature that you would expect from one of his grave period of life, neither would it always bear repeating. On the other hand, it was quite impossible to sketch any course of action for the benefit of mankind, for the enlightenment of science, for the protection of genius, or, in a word, for the general amelioration of the human race, without finding his soul spring forth to the highest position to combat in the interest of brother man with the most determined energy. He had a hand open as day to melting charity. It was impossible to know him and not to love him; it was impossible to offend him and not to fear him. Yet he never seemed to take that hold upon the reverence of mankind which the less winning and most austere deportment of the Duke at once obtained. Strange to say, a great number of the Duke's friends, though admiring his Grace infinitely, and ready to follow his leading under any circumstances of loss or disadvantage, still entertained a sort of terror of his presence. They were constantly seen to be in absolute fear of coming into his society; getting out of his way at the club, and leaving him as a sort of stalking lion at times when they might have enjoyed every advantage of his conversation they desired. With Brilliant the case was quite the reverse. Even his enemies, and those who condemned him most, were always delighted to flock around him, to share the amusement which fell from his lips; indeed, it was very difficult, however much we might condemn Lord Brilliant's career in any part, to enter into the charmed circle of his presence, and yet to come out of it a hostile critic. The most timid child that lisped would not have been afraid for an instant to have accepted Brilliant's invitation to romp or play. The Duke could scarcely utter a dozen sentences grammatically. Brilliant could scarcely count the languages with which his eloquence was familiar.

At the end of the table, opposite Hardheart, sat an Irish earl, one of the very slowest mortals with whom it was possible to come in contact.

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"Why the deuce does Hardheart generally make Clancreepie one in his dinner-parties? Do not you think he is a very slow fellow, Brilliant?"

"Oh, of course," said Brilliant; "but Hardheart could not have the conscience, being a bachelor, to put any man at the bottom of his table who had any good thing to say; and as he and Clancreepie are neighbours, he is the very thing for him."

Next to Clancreepie sat an English baron, Lord Bardsley. He was one of those mixed characters which you hardly know whether most to admire for the good that is in them, or to blame for the inconsistency that has a tendency to render the good unavailing. In early life his lordship was known for his love of letters and taste for poetry; but in this he was rather unfortunate: for one of his effusions having given offence to a peppery general, his lordship, who had not then come to his title, had to walk out early one morning, and go through that very unpleasant process, called the *duello*. The general was that disagreeable thing, a good shot, and he not only hit Lord Bardsley, but his ball lodged right over the poetical youth's heart, and Bardsley was taken from the field something very like a dying man.

By great good luck, the accident happened sufficiently near London to call in the immediate services of the celebrated army surgeon, Goldspur, whose work upon gunshot-wounds has made him equally famous with us in America as in Europe.

"You're a pretty boy," said Goldspur, as he shook his head over this terrific wound in the breast. "Not a word are you to speak for the next four-and-twenty hours—hold your tongue like a good boy, and we will indulge you with five dozen of eeches round this wound."

Giving his directions with all the decision and energy of a man of genius, accustomed to the field of battle, Goldspur posted one of his most efficient aides-de-camp as a guard at Bardsley's bed-side, who never left him, night or day. Goldspur came to see him every two hours, and the moment Bardsley complained of pain, on went two dozen additional leeches.

For several days, despite all the care which skill could take or science suggest, Death seemed momentarily about to pounce

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upon his prey. Bulletins were published in London of the interesting patient; and after several weeks of great anxiety, this great triumph of Goldspur's art providentially resulted in Bardsley's acquiring a fresh grant of his life, and signifying his convalescence to the expectant public, by his appearance in a most interesting state of pallor at the bazaar held in aid of the funds of the Ophthalmic Hospital, which Goldspur's kind heart, seconding his genius, had just started for the relief of the blind.

Ah! my Lord Bardsley, who would imagine that, when Heaven heard the prayers of your sick bed, and gave you this new lease of your life, any carelessness or thoughtlessness of yours would in after-years risk lives of others—and those among the most helpless and interesting of our species, the infant children of the poor, the friendless climbing-boys? But so it was to be, and yet Lord Bardsley's soul was far from inaccessible to several warm and generous emotions. There was about him a great deal of candour. His character was strongly marked by an open and affable temperament. He felt keenly the wrongs and oppressions of public life; and when you talked to him of the iniquities of Chancery, of the ruin caused to endless families by the delays of the law, no man was ever more convinced of those great public evils, and no man was more ready to remedy them—no member of the Law Amendment Society more loud in denouncing them, or forward in suggesting remedies.

Can it be believed, then, that Lord Bardsley was among those who would advocate a breach of the law protecting climbing-boys, or construct chimneys in his own palatial mansion in the north of England, so ill considered, and so completely at variance with the statute, that only climbing-boys could sweep them? Yet so it was.

Strange inconsistency of the human mind!

This, at any rate, must be admitted for Bardsley: that for ever after the dangerous wound in question he manifested the warmest gratitude to Goldspur, and took every opportunity of proving how completely he considered himself, humanly speaking, indebted to the man of genius for his wonderful rescue from impending death.

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Goldspur himself sat at the same table, on the day in question, not far distant from the peer whose life he had saved, and few men in the metropolis had had more frequently the members of the Upper House under his finger and thumb, or knew more completely the various shades of character of which that singular and famous class is composed. The great Duke himself was a very old patient of Goldspur, who had gone through the most distinguished of his campaigns with him; and no man of any class in society was ever more honourably distinguished for the fearless and independent way in which he always bore the banner of truth and science, however distinguished the host might be amid which he moved.

Fond as Englishmen are of ancestral honours, there is a class among them who have sufficient virtue to pass them coldly by, and hold honours of intellect in preference. Goldspur was among those, being one of the few men of his time who had refused a baronetcy, preferring the simple addition of F.R.S., with that well-merited fame which has made his name immortal in the pages of science.

Besides the gifts of intellect which Goldspur possessed, nature had also favoured him with a very fine person. In height he stood about five feet ten, with a most capacious chest, and an erect and commanding carriage, which well typified his resolute and courageous character. His well-chiselled nose, eagle glance, and ample forehead, bespoke him at once as a man formed for scenes of danger, and perfectly fitted to cope with it. He wore his hair generally well off his forehead, and spoke in a short, sharp, decisive manner, like one who never allowed his commands to be disputed in any matter where he had a right to direct. He had a natural love of humour, and rarely spared those who offended against the canons of humanity and good feeling. He knew mankind with the quickness of one who had studied the book of life in every page, while the little trick that he had of unconsciously passing his forefinger sharply behind his ear, every now and then, might have been, for aught I know, sympathetic of the great influence which the organ of cautiousness still exercised over the more impulsive parts of his character. Having served with the Marquis of Hardheart

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throughout the whole of the Peninsular campaign, Goldspur was one of the few men from whom Hardheart would brook much contradiction; but, with all his severity of character, Hardheart was too often an invalid not to make him lean with considerable tenderness towards a medical officer of such tried services as Goldspur. Moreover, Goldspur was remarkably fond of shooting and of billiards, two amusements dear to the heart of the noble marquis, and at which they had both spent much of their time together.

Another peer and a member of Parliament made up the party.

But who was that member of Parliament?

One of the most singular and distinguished men who has ever appeared in the English House of Commons.

Born a member of a nation despised for centuries, it was his lot at starting in life to meet his full share of the obloquy of his race.

While other men who seek the Legislature are compelled to make unbounded demands on their purses, generally filled from some hereditary fountain, this young senator had little beyond the resources of his own brains from which to meet the ample demands of frequent contests for the honour of a seat.

An unfortunate encounter with a reckless and foul-mouthed Irish Liberal, of almost matchless ability, covered at the starting of life the literary aspirant with universal ridicule.

These were heavy odds against which to achieve greatness. Nine thousand men would have sunk under them out of nine thousand and one. The man of whom we write never had less idea of sinking than when thus heavily pressed.

At last he entered the House; and the House, usually so tolerant to young persons, shared all the prejudices against his race, and churlishly refused him a fair hearing. With a boldness bordering on temerity, the novice denounced the English House of Commons to their very teeth; told them the time should come when they should hear him; and, marvellous to relate, was able afterwards to keep his word, and not only to make that House hear him, but to hurl from office and impale upon the points of his ridicule one of the most powerful ministers

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that House ever supported—nay, more than that, to force his way into the Queen's Cabinet; and, at the very first office that he held, to come forth as the chief support of an administration, and the leader of that very House of Commons which had once refused to hear him.

Surely only one such character as this ever appeared in England; and no one can doubt that I paint the character of Sidonius Palestinus.

No mortal man knew what to make of Palestinus. His own party were bound to follow him, for they could not put forward anyone at all to compare with him in skill, imagination, or eloquence. His enemies always gave him a wide berth, for there was no mortal man whose sarcasm was more justly to be dreaded.

A curious coincidence of circumstances has drawn him, one of the most liberal-minded of the Liberals in early life, to the head and leadership of that party which so long withstood everything liberal or improving.

The great majority of his followers were men who would have called themselves of high birth, and they looked with intense jealousy on Palestinus, as a man who had risen from the people, and one not entitled to be held of their exclusive caste. Poor idle dreamers! The very highest extent to which their pedigrees went would never have approached, in its humblest portion, the long and perfectly-traced descent of Palestinus, who could have given them chapter and verse of his descent from Abraham.

While everybody cried out, "Do not trust him," not one of them knew why they should distrust him, except from the fact that their inferior abilities made them curse themselves that they were obliged to follow and depend upon him.

In private life his manners were kind, gentle, and winning; and those who are best entitled to be heard upon the subject all admit, that he richly deserved every one of those high honours that his untiring industry and commanding genius had won for him—in a contest in which, indeed, it may truly be said, the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.

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"What is the age of this house, Hardheart?" said Lord Bardsley, in one of those pauses in the conversation from which men frequently extricate themselves by reference to the object nearest to the eye.

"Well, I hardly know, the house has been so frequently remodelled and modernised; but, according to the 'History of Middlesex,' it was built in the beginning of the reign of Charles the First."

"Indeed! I should not have thought it had been so old as that. It must have been very much altered, though the hall and staircase appear to have been well preserved."

"They are very well preserved, and very fine; but what strikes me as very singular in the houses of that period is the great variety we find in the sizes of the rooms. Many of our old houses of that reign possess very large and noble apartments; but referring generally to the domestic architecture of the English at that time, the rooms of many celebrated residences seem to us, with our modern notions, small and confined—and that is the case in this house. Our ancestors must frequently have been content with smaller rooms than their degenerate descendants."

"Ah!" said Brilliant, "a good deal depends upon the individual taste of the builder. Now, the Duke of York was very fond of what he called a snug room, and several of the rooms which were built for him in Stafford House were very much smaller than you would have expected to find in his time, and built by his wishes. But our friend Bardsley there, he is one of the modern builders. I say, Bardsley, you have some very fine rooms in your house in Yorkshire." And this was said with one of those twitches of Brilliant's nose and that sarcastic smile of his which always showed to those around him that he was bound upon some mischief.

Bardsley was an intimate friend of Brilliant; they both rode the same hobby, and a most excellent hobby to ride—the improvement of the dilatory, expensive, and complicated laws of England. They were both leading members of the Law Improvement Society; and though Brilliant, since his quarrel with his party, always sat on the opposition side of the House, and

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Bardsley took his seat on the ministerial, yet in most matters they drove their horses together with great concord.

Bardsley knew very well, when he beheld Brilliant's nose working, the style of speech that was likely to be coming. No man knew better than Bardsley how delightedly fond of teasing Brilliant was, even with his most intimate associates. He also knew that the only way to avoid Brilliant was not by the hopeless method of attempting any reply to him. Woe betide that unhappy wretch who pursued this course! Brilliant never was answered yet, or however ably answered, but he always contrived to let out some stinging rejoinder that made the matter more hopeless for his antagonist. No, the only way of dealing with Brilliant in these humours was to give the conversation some quick and skilful turn, which, catching the rapid imagination of Brilliant, led him almost involuntarily beside his mark.

"Oh, yes, yes, there are," carelessly replied Bardsley. "By the bye, I was admiring a house the other day in Genoa—"

"Oh, Genoa is a long way off," said Brilliant, seeing through the trick, and then turning to the great Duke. "I say, Duke, Bardsley has just been performing the office of his own architect. He has accomplished one of the most singular feats of building on record."

"But really that house in Genoa—" interrupted Bardsley.

"Is nothing to the house in Yorkshire, Duke," continued Brilliant. "Bardsley, there, has been pulling down half of his ancestral hall for the pleasure of building it up again; and, among other feats, as his own architect he has contrived some twenty or thirty chimneys with such wonderful cleverness that it is not possible to sweep any one of them without being obliged to send a poor child up the chimney, at such imminent risk of his life that his father is obliged to go upon the roof of the building on the outside for fear his son should be suffocated in the attempt; and unless the father should be close at hand to break through the outer wall, and so make an entrance into the chimney, the poor boy might lose his life. Now, is it not wonderful how Bardsley could have exerted so vast an amount of ingenuity and ability as to build some twenty odd chimneys

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in this most able manner? Twenty chimneys absolutely! think of a man, his own architect too, and building twenty chimneys, not one of which can be swept without breaking the law of the land!"

A general laugh followed, of course, at Bardsley's expense, and the old Duke smiled slightly himself at the lively picture drawn by his noble and learned friend Brilliant of his noble friend's architectural abilities.

"I was just about," said the Duke, slightly shaking his head, and drawing in his cheeks, as he was wont to do when some very serious subject occupied his mind—"I was just about to ask you, Lord Brilliant, whether it was not illegal now to send a boy under twenty-one years of age up a chimney? I have a strong recollection that it was made penal by a statute passed no very great length of time ago. For my own part, I know that under that impression, as soon as the Act passed, I had all my own chimneys altered at Apsley House at some expense; and after it was done I remember an intelligent builder seeing the chimneys, and showing me that all the necessary alterations to sweep them by machinery might have been accomplished for a twentieth of the sum I paid."

"Now, I have often heard that question debated, Duke," said Lord Hardheart; "did you indeed really alter them?"

"Of course, my lord, I did, when the law of the land forbade me to sweep my chimneys by boys, and none but boys could ascend them; was it not my duty to have them altered so that they might be swept by machinery?"

"Well, Duke, all I can say is, that if they had been my chimneys I would have seen both Houses of Parliament d—— first before I would have taken a penny out of my pocket to make the slightest alteration for them."

"Aye!" said the Duke very deliberately, holding down his head, and half smiling in that quiet way which he often used with men of his own rank, when he intended a quiet rap over the knuckles; "it is very easy, my lord, to d— both Houses of Parliament, but I am afraid both our titles and estates would be very little use to our children without them."

"Oh, of course, Duke, that was a mere *façon de parler*; I

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only meant to say that a law so absurd and ridiculous as the law against climbing-boys deserves to be treated with the contempt it meets—namely, that every man should violate it at his pleasure."

"Do you violate it, marquis?" said the Duke, without moving a muscle, and stedfastly looking at his host.

"I have the most thorough contempt for such trash," replied the marquis, "and all the humanity-mongers who agitated the question. Why should any man dictate to me how I am to have my chimneys swept, if I use a willing agent, and pay for the operation?"

"Yes, but, my lord, it appears to me that there is a higher principle at stake than that," returned the Duke, "because you might find some one generous or devoted enough to consent that his throat should be cut, if you would put down a certain sum for the benefit of his widow and children; but I apprehend, my Lord Brilliant," turning to the ex-chancellor, "my noble friend would be hung for cutting anyone's throat under such circumstances—would he not?—notwithstanding he had a willing agent to undergo the incision of his razor, and had previously put down the money to pay for the operation."

A general laugh followed this sally of the Duke, which Brilliant took care to prolong by replying to the Duke's query.

"Would the marquis be hanged for such an act?—that is your question; is it not, Duke?"

"Yes, it is."

"Not a doubt of it. He would be hanged, and every farthing of unentailed property that he has in the world would go to the Crown; and Bardsley, there, who sits so close to the ministerial benches that he must soon be a Lord of the Treasury, might very probably have the pleasure of deciding how Hardheart's property should be appropriated—that is, Duke, if Bardsley does not get into some similar scrape himself. I am always telling him, with his twenty-seven chimneys, that he will be getting his unfortunate sweep-boy stuck fast there some early morning—that the father will not be able to come at him in the operation of cutting him out of the brickwork—that there will be a coroner's inquest held in Bardsley's dining-

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room on the dead body. Evidence will be produced to show a reckless indifference to human life; and that, I am sure, Duke, may be easily inferred when a man builds upwards of twenty chimneys which can only be swept by a violation of the law. And what will happen, Duke? Why, poor Bardsley will be brought in guilty of manslaughter, if not of murder, and all his property will pass to the Crown. I must say," added Brilliant, holding out his hand as if to procure a hearing from the laughter of those around him—"I must say, it was well worthy of a great and generous mind like Bardsley's, and, I must also add, like Hardheart's, to run the risk of being made felons by a verdict of manslaughter, merely for the amusement of sweeping their chimneys by a living machine instead of an inanimate one. It is a very philosophical devotion of the mind of great statesmen."

"Well, Brilliant," retorted Bardsley, "I protest against all this laughter. It is all very well for you to make a joke of the matter, as you can of everything you like to turn into ridicule; but I put it seriously to the Duke, who has had his chimneys altered in compliance with the Act, whether he does not consider that it was a very arbitrary and tyrannical Act to put him to considerable expense, merely on the plea that some of these urchins got their knees sore and all the skin rubbed off?"

"Well, Bardsley," said the Duke, "if you put it to me seriously, I am sure I will most seriously answer the question. First of all, I had my chimneys altered with pleasure, because the law required it, and I considered that I should be doing something scarcely honest if I, who hold my titles and my property by favour of the law, did not show to that law the even-handed reverence of following its dictates when it attempted to preserve the persons and the liberties of the children of the poor. Few men will accuse me of being a popularity hunter—indeed, you all know that I constantly go under an iron appellation by my grateful countrymen; but I must say, Bardsley, that I think this country would soon be in a state of hopeless anarchy and civil war if the higher classes were to decide that they would only reverence those laws which secured their properties and privileges, and trample on those which protect the rights of the poor and humble."

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"Oh, but I do not go the length of saying that."

"Yes, but indeed you do. This law to put down all the atrocities of climbing-children is essentially a law to protect the children of the poor, even from their own parents, who, I am sorry to say, are among the very foremost to sell their children into this slavery. The evidence on the committee before the bill was passed was most revolting, was most overwhelming. It was an opprobrium upon any civilised country; and whatever the law may be, we cannot with any safety to the higher orders say that we will trample on it. You know, and I saw, what occurred in Spain, when even the discipline and the overwhelming forces of Napoleon could not contend against a people seriously united, and resolved to uphold their laws and liberties; and as a stanch Conservative, I must express my belief that the only reason we require no standing army to preserve order in England arises from the confidence entertained by the great masses of the people and the poor in the equal administration of our laws. I must say, if we ever unfortunately indoctrinate the masses with reason to doubt the obedience of the upper classes to the law, I know of no amount of troops that could long uphold order in the state. After all, you must draw your troops from the people. One law for the rich and another for the poor is the very essence of rank injustice, and where real injustice is committed I know of few men who discern it more readily than the English common soldier. If I remember rightly, Brilliant, the evidence which led to this law showed that many thousands of children were found to be exposed to the most hideous cruelties—burnt and roasted alive, tortured by brutal and drunken masters, driven up chimneys in flames, falling down chimneys on fire, going into boiler-flues so hot that they were obliged to have boards put under them to prevent them from being gridironed alive; and, in addition to all this, the children were constantly sold by their parents and masters for five shillings a head to undergo all this iniquity. It was impossible to educate them, because they were never able to herd with any others in their own class; scarcely any of them could read or write; and if my mind serves me rightly, it was proved that they were very rarely washed—that they slept

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upon heaps of soot, in most revolting cellars—that they had little or no food given them, except the broken victuals that they begged at the houses where they were employed—that they began this incarnate degradation as young as five years of age, when our own children have not escaped from the nursery; and, finally, that by their constant contact with the soot they laid the seeds of a most revolting cancer, which frequently terminated their existence under circumstances of the most offensive suffering. Am I speaking by the book, Goldspur? You ought to know something about these matters."

"You are quite right, Duke; the chimney-sweeper's cancer is the disease to which you allude, and it is impossible to employ children in cleaning chimneys without laying them open to the attacks of this fearful and horrible gangrene."

"Well, but, Goldspur," interposed the marquis, "you talk of gangrene. After all, this disease, I suppose, can be cured."

"That depends, Hardheart, upon the stage at which you attack it, and even then you can only cure it by cutting it out; and how would you like to have some of the most tender parts of your person cut out with a knife, because your parents or guardians had sold you for five shillings to the most revolting of all occupations? And even after cutting out the malignant part as far as can be detected, the disease will return."

"Now, tell us, Goldspur," said Brilliant, "how does this disease arise?"

"Why, in this way; the soot gets into the crevices of the skin, and it is impossible to prevent it. Those little children sometimes sweep from six to eighteen chimneys a day. How could it be practicable to have these little things washed between every chimney with soap and water, so carefully as to keep the soot from getting into the pores of the skin?"

"Oh, that would be impossible, Goldspur."

"Of course it would; and, from the soot lodging in the skin, it acts in some way which science cannot trace. It is carried by the absorbents into the system, and the cancer breaks out in the back, and generally proves fatal."

"Well, but, Goldspur," said Bardsley, "even if you sweep with machinery, the chimney-sweepers may have this disease?"

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"Yes, they may; but with the machine the soot only gets upon the hands, and it is an easy matter to keep the hands clean. When a boy goes up a chimney he is generally half naked, his whole person is enveloped in soot, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot; the soot even gets impacted into a hard mass, and he has to kick his way through it at the risk of his life. Grown up men can make their own choice whether they will take to this dangerous operation or not; but when you allow children of tender years to be brought up to such a trade, it is a manifest iniquity, because they are unable to exercise any choice in the matter."

"Precisely, Goldspur," said the Duke, "and that always struck me as the very basis of the whole argument; but there is one thing I cannot understand, and that is, how these little infants of five years old are first induced to do a thing so revolting to all human feelings as to ascend a long, dark, dirty chimney. I am sure, recalling the time when I was five years, it would have required very strong inducements to make me enter into such a calling; and, of course, the feelings of one child are the feelings of all children. How is it managed?"

"Why, Duke, there is only one way of managing it, of course, and that is, by the most unflinching brutality: a child is put up a chimney, and, if he will not climb, the master puts his hand under him and runs some sharp instrument into him. Generally, I believe, an old boy is sent up after him with a pin or a shoemaker's awl, and sometimes fires have been lit under a child, who is thus driven up to escape the flame."

"Do you think, marquis," said the Duke, turning to his host, "that is a system for a country pretending to have free institutions?"

"Oh, as to that, Duke, I suspect Goldspur has been imposed upon."

"At any rate, Hardheart, there still exist on record the minutes of the evidence taken before the committee; there can be no imposition in that."

"Well, at any rate, whatever the cruelties of the system may have been," responded Hardheart, feeling himself pushed, "those cruelties do not exist at the present day."

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"Indeed they do, though, Hardheart," said Brilliant. "Do not you flatter yourself that if you are virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale. So long as climbing-boys are permitted at all, these villanous atrocities always will be perpetrated against them, for it arises of necessity out of their degraded and friendless position. You cannot allow children of five, six, ten, or twelve years of age, to be employed in one of the most loathsome and degrading of all callings by a class of drunken, reprobate masters, without, as a matter of course, reproducing all the iniquities that Goldspur was speaking of."

"Duke, how many of these poor wretches of climbing-boys do you suppose there are now in the kingdom, exclusive of Scotland and Ireland?" said Palestinus, who had been attentively listening to the conversation, without taking any part in it.

"Why, I dare say there are still some hundreds."

"There are no less than four thousand, Duke,"* said Palestinus, "and the number is daily increasing."

"I am very sorry for it. It appeared to me a very necessary law, that which prohibited climbing-boys; and it is very melancholy to think that the law should be trampled on, even though Bardsley does like to turn his own architect."

"Yes, Duke," said Goldspur. "If there were the slightest occasion for the services of these children, one might be reconciled to it; but when you see a metropolis like London, with upwards of 2,000,000 of inhabitants,† sweeping their chimneys without children, what can you say of those who persist in carrying out the old system, except that they are led to it from a sheer indifference to cruelty?"

"Come, come, Duke," said the marquis, who was evidently getting a little sore at the prolonged laugh against him; "you had better enjoy the mirth of these youngsters with a little moderation, and just remember that I served under you in the Peninsular for some years. A very slight tax upon my memory will enable me to tell ten stories against you for every one you can bring up against me."

"Stories against me!—stories against me!" said the Duke,

* See Appendix, Question and Answer before the Lords 228.

† See evidence before the Lords in Appendix, Q. and A. 232.

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drawing in his cheek, and nodding with a subdued smile. "Hopeless reprisals! Hopeless reprisals! Everyone knows my character—most correct man in the world—most correct man in the world."

"There, marquis," said Palestinus, "there is both a traverse and defiance—you may fairly bring out your budget."

"We can promise you a most favourable audience," said Brilliant.

"There now, Duke, you see how soon the tables are turned. These fellows do not care whom the story is against, provided they get a laugh out of it."

"Nothing more," said Brilliant. "The most disinterested people we are. But for your story against the Duke."

"Shall I tell against my own chief?" said the marquis, appealing to the hero.

"Oh, tell away, my lord—tell away. No man can tell a story against me."

"Oh, cannot I, though? We will soon see about that. Brilliant, you hint at my being found guilty of murder. Now, I should like your legal opinion of this case against the Duke. Some little time before the affair of Torres Vedras, we were in action, and I was sitting on horseback near the duke, while Colonel Agasiz received orders about holding an advanced post. 'You are to hold the enemy in check as well as you can on the other side of the river,' said the Duke. 'If the enemy comes up in too great a force to hold your position, retreat upon the bridge. Hold that bridge while one stone hangs to another; and if you find you are driven over the bridge, blow it up in the face of the enemy.' Off went Colonel Agasiz; and I thought the chances were very strong that I should never see him again. Himself, and his men, and the bridge were all in sight from the spot where the Duke and myself were placed. For a long time he held his advanced post most gallantly; but the enemy came up in great force, and drove him slowly back upon the bridge—he all the while fighting with the pluck of ten Donnybrook fairs. On the bridge he made the most gallant stand possible; but the enemy's artillery was brought into play upon it with resistless precision—whole

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gaps at a time were made in our men, the battlements of the bridge were entirely swept away, and our boys were being mowed over the side by half-a-dozen at the time. To hold the bridge longer was impossible. Agasiz contrived, however, to withdraw his men in good order; and I saw by the Duke's face that he was right well pleased, as, with his eye fixed on his glass, he seemed to be enjoying the fun. 'Blow up, blow up,' I heard him mutter to himself as our men came off the bridge, and the enemy's artillery slackened fire for a few seconds to allow of their own men to rush over. In an instant the Duke's satisfaction was changed to the most dismal rage, and no blow up of the bridge took place. While Agasiz was busy forming his men under a galling fire, the enemy came charging over the bridge thick and threefold, and in an instant the Duke's flank was turned. 'Hopemore,' said he, turning round to me, and taking his glass from his eye, 'go and shoot that fellow Agasiz directly!' I opened my mouth with amazement. 'Take a file of five men directly,' said the Duke, 'and go and shoot that fellow Agasiz this instant!' Seeing that this was meant, I turned my horse, and spurred off to my old regiment, the —th. Agasiz was well known to all of us—as gallant an Irishman as ever breathed; and I knew very well the non-blowing up of the bridge was some blunder, or possibly the mine might have been lit, and failed; or the man appointed to do it might have been shot in the act of firing it. Moreover, I had very great doubts in my own mind as to the legality both of the order and of its fulfilment. On arriving at my own regiment, I told the colonel, in a loud voice, that I was ordered to take a file of five men, and go and shoot Colonel Agasiz for neglect of orders, and begged the colonel to let me have the five men immediately, for fear some one might go and tell him of the order that was issued, and he might succeed in getting out of the way. As I said this, I turned my head and gave a slight wink to O'Brien of ours, and in a few seconds afterwards I saw him galloping across the field, and have no doubt he soon put Agasiz *au courant* as to the treat that was coming to him. After as much delay as could be decently made, and drawing lots for the men out

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of the worst shots in the regiment, I and my five troopers set off in quest of Colonel Agasiz. Of course I did not find him, and of course I remained hunting for him the whole of that day, and of course I was dreadfully grieved at the probability of having to report on the following morning my utter inability to find the culprit. In the meantime, poor Agasiz had been reported missing; and the Duke, concluding that his orders had been executed under this delicate return, said nothing to me the next morning at breakfast, and of course I took very good care to say nothing to him; nor was Agasiz's name ever mentioned between us for many months; and one day the Duke was walking past the Opera House at Lisbon, when, who should come round the corner and almost bounce against him, looking as hearty, and rosy, and jolly as ever, but our friend Agasiz. The Duke absolutely came to a full stop. No man, I believe, ever saw him look so surprised in his life. 'Why—why—why—where the devil did *you* come from? I thought I had shot you!'

"'No, my lord—not quite.'

"'Well, well, I intended it, you know. It is the same thing—the same thing.'

"'Oh, my lord, I am equally in your lordship's debt entirely; but I thought I had better take a run home first to ould Ireland, and raise another mortgage on the family acres, and, by a special blessing, I did get hold of the money; but contrary winds detained me a week too long in Dublin, and, by some accident or another, the divil a farthing of it would stick to me by the time I reached Charing Cross!"

"'Well, well, well!' said the Duke; 'I am glad to see you looking well—I am glad to see you looking well. Good morning.'"

"I do not remember," said the Duke, "about the mortgage, and I do not remember his coming round the corner; but I do remember meeting him in Lisbon; and my impression is, that I was laughing at a story that my nephew, Lord Maddington, was telling me, then my aide-de-camp, about himself, and the Prince of Wales, and the old Countess Lieven; and Agasiz, who had been over to Ireland and come back again, watching

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me from a distance, and seeing me in what he thought a good humour, conceived it a good opportunity to come up and get his pardon. To say the truth, I was not sorry to see him again, although his breach of orders had cost many lives. I was sorry so gallant a fellow should be shot by English bullets. I remember I gave him back his regiment, and he distinguished himself several times, and is now a major-general, if I remember rightly."

"There, Brilliant, now you know my story is true, do not you think that was a case of intended murder on the part of the Duke, if I had not given him the benefit of my humane interposition?"

"Why, really, marquis," said Brilliant, "it requires great discrimination to say which is the worst criminal of the two, the Duke or you. You military men seem a sanguinary set of fellows to those who fall into your clutches. As for you, Lord Hardheart, you have had your punishment this evening; but I think we must condemn the Duke to tell that story of the Prince of Wales and the Countess Lieven."

"Story—story? I will tell you what it is, Brilliant," replied the Duke. "I am not a betting man, you know; but I do not mind offering you a fair wager that I will much more readily tell my story of the Prince of Wales than you will tell your story of the Princess of Wales."

"Ha! ha! Brilliant," said Hardheart; "you caught it there."

"But I admit the soft impeachment. I own I shall be much more unwilling to tell any story of myself than the Duke can be to tell that of the Countess Lieven and the Prince of Wales. So he had better begin it at once."

"It is not my story—it is Maddington's story," said the Duke. "I do not mean to vouch for a word of it. The Prince used to be very fond of inviting himself to dinner with Maddington, and always called him William. Maddington was never known to be in time for anything in his life; he never kept an appointment yet that he made—even with a money-lender, and no man ever knew Maddington without having had to wait for him. Well, one day the Prince was to dine with him—Maddington had been out hunting. Dinner was

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announced, and everyone begged the Prince to sit down, but he would persist in waiting for Maddington. At last, after a long delay, my nephew was seen galloping across the park, with Lord Hasty by his side. 'I say, Hasty,' said Maddington, 'we must have kept the Prince of Wales waiting at least half an hour. What ridiculous story shall we tell him when we get in?' 'Oh, I leave that entirely to you, Maddington,' said Hasty. 'It is quite out of my line—I never keep people waiting; you always do, you know; therefore, you best can tell how they are to be appeased.' 'Oh, he has not waited much,' said Maddington—'only half an hour; and for a Prince of Wales when hungry to be kept fasting half an hour is a sort of national service for which the country could not be too grateful if it only knew it; but we must tell him a good story though, or he will be sulky all dinner-time. Did not some one tell me in the hunt to-day that the old Countess Lieven had come to take a house in this neighbourhood?' 'Yes, to be sure; Sir John Tattingford said that he had just let her Homechase Park.' 'That will do. You shall see what a story I will cook the Prince out of that. He hates the old Countess Lieven most entirely. Come along. All right.' Up galloped Maddington and Hasty to the door, and on entering the hall they looked up and beheld the Prince of Wales looking down over the gallery near the drawing-room door. 'Now, William! now, William! this is too bad,' said the Prince. 'You have kept me waiting half an hour.' 'I cry your Highness's pardon,' said Maddington, bounding up the stairs, plashed from top to toe; 'but when you hear the cause of the delay, I am sure you will forgive me. We had killed one fox, and we were all coming home in excellent time like very good boys, when just at the four cross-roads, near Audley End, the old Countess Lieven and her carriage crossed the road from paying a visit to Lord Braybrooke, and, by Jove! the hounds got scent of her, and we couldn't get them off.' 'Oh, capital! capital! capital!' said the Prince of Wales, clapping his hands and bursting into a roar of laughter. 'There, that will do; we will have the rest of the story after dinner. Go and get your bit of pink off, and let us sit down, for I am famishing.' There,

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that was the story I was laughing at when Agasiz came up and took the benefit of the joke."

"But what became of the Countess Lieven?" said Bardsley.

"I do not know how Maddington disposed of her, but I know the Prince recovered his good temper, and some hundred and fifty ridiculous incidents followed if you are to believe Maddington's account; but after hearing the great facility with which he hunted the Countess Lieven, most of his stories must, I fear, be deemed apocryphal."

The usual round of conversation—the opera, the wine crop, the length of the session, and other matters, followed.

Coffee made its appearance, and in another half-hour the various guests had departed.

CHAPTER VII.

How naturally man turns to the weather-glass before quitting his dwelling for the open air! How perfect and how wonderful is the instrument, and the information it conveys to him! But in the human breast is there no secret indicator of coming misfortune? It is indescribable, though it exists. Who has not felt it? The poet tells us that

Coming events cast their shadows before;

and he is right.

The Marquis of Hardheart had given a grand and a select dinner-party. With such guests at his table, how many men in the vast metropolis of London would have envied him as a most honoured mortal! But had the dinner-party left any feelings of pleasure in his heart? If so, his brow belied his breast. Care, and sorrow, and depression weighed on it, as, passing into the library, after bidding his last guest adieu, he drew a chair, and, sitting over the fire, uttered a deep sigh. Yet he could scarcely tell what it was that oppressed him.

He rang the bell, intending to order his carriage for an evening-party; but instead of the groom of the chambers making his appearance alone, the butler came with him, and in the

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looks of both these men the marquis read the intelligence of some approaching calamity.

"What is the matter?" said he, looking from one to the other.

But they both hung their heads with an expression of mixed grief and abasement, and as if they dared not say what had happened. Both remained silent.

"What is the matter! What has happened?" said the marquis, stamping his foot.

"My lord, we are very sorry—"

"Sorry for what? What infernal bore are you come to announce now? Is the house on fire?"

"No, my lord," said the butler: "worse than that."

"Is the cook dead?"

"I wish that was all, my lord."

"The deuce you do!" said the marquis, jumping up on his feet, and facing the servants behind him, for every one in his establishment knew the value that he placed on a first-rate cook who had been with him for many years.

At first he almost suspected that his own jest as to the cook's death had been returned by the butler, but when he looked at the man's terrified face he knew this could not be the case. In an instant the light seemed to break into his mind.

"My son—my son! Sure nothing has happened to my son?"

The men were silent.

"Fools! what is it?" and the marquis was dashing to the door.

"My lord, he is not there," said the terrified butler, bowing to the ground, while the groom of the chambers slid out at a side-door, as if anxious to get off, out of the way of the burst that was coming.

"Not there! Not where? Is he not in his bed?"

"My lord, the little earl, I grieve to tell you, appears to have strayed out of the grounds to-day."

"Strayed! What, lost! Do you mean lost? You do not mean to tell me that he is lost?"

In an instant the marquis's infuriated grasp was on the butler's neck, and, shaking him as a reed is shaken by the wind,

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the unfortunate retainer in the next instant was dashed into a corner, and away rushed the marquis up the ample staircase, flight after flight, until he reached his bedroom.

Bursting open the door, he sprang towards the exquisite bed of the little earl, enriched with carving and gilding, and lace; but, alas! it was tenantless.

He looked into his own bed; no human being occupied that. His son's couch was turned down, the lace pillow duly smoothed; the cambric sheets turned aside, ready to receive the darling of the peer, but turned, alas! in vain. There was his little bath standing all ready for him, but unused; and the marquis beheld those mute but heart-rending evidences of his terrific loss. He stood for an instant behind the son's bed, mute in the agony of fear and despair.

"O Heaven! my son, my son!" exclaimed the marquis, as the dreadful present and still more awful future burst upon him. Then, as if personal violence afforded some relief to his maddened feelings, he rushed with his uplifted foot to the door that opened into the little earl's nursery, kicked it open, and there, in various attitudes of misery and despair, were three women, his son's nurses; one of them still in strong hysterics on the bed, the other two with their eyes red with weeping, attempting to bring her to her senses.

"Where is my son?" thundered the marquis; "where is my son?"

In an instant both the nurses burst into a tempest of screams and exclamations.

"You villanous old hag!" cried the marquis, making a clutch at the neck of the eldest nurse, and, luckily for her sake, missing her, "tell me where my son is, or, by the sun that lights the sky, I will shake the life out of you!"

"O my lord, my lord," cried the nurse, who had rushed behind a large swing-glass, and now threw herself down on her knees; "do not be angry, my lord, and I will tell you all about it. Just after your lordship sat down to dinner to-day, there came an organ-man outside the great iron gates of this house—the dreary, old, misfortunate hole. I wish I had never seen it!"

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"My son," thundered the marquis, "where is he?" making another dart at her.

"I will tell you, my lord; I will tell you," said the nurse, dodging once more to the side of the glass. "He was last seen inside the iron gates, my lord, by Mary, his own maid, who lies there in hysterics on the bed, my lord; and she had just left him for a moment to speak to a young man. Most improper it was of her to do so, my lord, and so I have told her, only she is in such hysterics she can't hear me; and when she came back, my lord, the earl was gone."

"And why did you not come and tell me of it at once, you incarnate representation of all folly?"

"It was not my place, my lord, to come into the dining-room, and your lordships all at dinner; besides, my lord, I never knew anything of it till half an hour after it had happened, for when he was first missed the head-gardener—"

"Where is the gardener? Send him instantly to me."

"My lord, he is away with the police, searching for his little lordship; and when I first heard it I went out and searched, my lord."

"You be hanged, you d—d old fool! I wish you had broken your neck."

"I wish I had, my lord, before ever I had seen this dreadful day; but there we have been, my lord, hoping and hoping that the police would bring him back, and all of us frightened out of our lives and at our wits' end, not knowing what to do. My lord, all the horses is out, the carriages is all out, and all the servants is out, except what was waiting at your lordship's table; and what more could you have done if we had told you all about it at once, and we hoping every minute the little darling would be brought back, and your lordship never know anything about it to distress your lordship? We did it with the best intention, I do assure your lordship," and down the old nurse plumped once more upon her knees; while the marquis, seeing that he was wasting time, rushed down again to the hall, and endeavoured from the other servants to gain some more exact account of the dreadful calamity which had befallen him. In this, however, he was foiled. Even the person most to

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blame, the nursemaid, who had especial charge of him, could have given him no more precise account. She had orders never to lose sight of her charge; these orders she had evidently violated. She had orders that the iron gates of the grounds never should remain unlocked; these orders she had obeyed. True it was she had left him for a few moments in the bright light of the declining sun, to look through the ornamented iron bars at the organ-man playing outside with one of those instruments on which automaton figures move to the music. The gate she knew was locked when she left him, for she had tried it. She just stepped into the adjoining carriage-yard to buy a few bargains from a young pedlar, and when she came back the organ-grinder was gone, and the little earl was gone; but finding the iron gate still locked, she concluded, as a matter of course, that the child, although he might have quitted the gate on the departure of the musician, was still safe somewhere within the grounds. Under this belief she returned to the pedlar and his box of gewgaws, considering, as a matter of course, that she should find the little earl playing about on the lawn on the other side of the house, whenever she had time to leave her own vanities and seek him. At last, when the pedlar took his departure, the nursemaid, quite at her ease, sauntered round the kitchen-garden, the lawn, and the meadow, inquiring of the various gardeners for her young charge.

Unable to gain any tidings of him, she came in-doors and went up into his day nursery, quite convinced that he must be all safe, notwithstanding the information given her by the other nurses that he had not been seen in-doors. She went through all the rooms of the house calling him, for it was one of his frequent pranks to hide himself, seeing the consternation which his absence, even for five minutes, produced among those who were never allowed to lose sight of him.

No merry laugh from behind chair or table now spoke peace to the nurse's heart, as it had done on many a previous occasion.

After hunting the house through every bedroom and attic, she once more returned to the grounds, and communicating her alarm to the gardeners, they assisted her. The stables, coach-houses, lofts, every place was searched before they could

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at all entertain the suspicion that the little earl had got outside the prescribed bounds. They were all agreed that there was only one exit by which he could have strayed—the gates of the carriage-yard; but through these the nursemaid was almost certain he had not passed, as she and the pedlar had been standing within hearing, if not within sight of them, and she was sure she had not heard either the opening or shutting of those gates.

These circumstances not only added to the mystery, and perplexed the minds of those who searched for him, but they did what was infinitely more dangerous towards his recovery—they wasted much precious time that should have been occupied in reporting his loss to the police.

When the gardeners were unable to discover the missing heir, their alarm was not less than that of the nurses; although they knew themselves to be blameless in the matter, yet they dreaded the anger of the marquis so much—they knew so well what a case of life and death it would be to him, that in the very extremity of their apprehension they were hardly able to command calm reason in deciding what course to pursue.

At last, when nearly an hour and a half had elapsed since the loss of the young earl had first been discovered, the head-gardener hurried off to the chief police-station, which was at some distance from the house—namely, at Kensington—while the two other gardeners scoured the roads in the neighbourhood, asking at every shop and house if anything had been seen of the missing child.

Not the faintest trace could be discovered of him; and, when the police arrived, they were utterly unable to explain the mystery which enshrouded the child's absence, or suggest any possible means of recovering him.

The head of the police having consulted with the butler, they decided not to interfere with the marquis's dinner, chiefly upon the ground that, if he were told of it, he could do nothing more than they could without him; and if the child could be found without the marquis hearing of his loss, it would save a great deal of unnecessary agony to the unhappy parent, to say nothing of the places of several of the servants.

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CHAPTER VIII.

In the perplexity of grief, the futile efforts, the vain councils that we have described in the last chapter, the night wore away. Still the young earl was undiscovered, nor did any additional facts transpire to explain his disappearance.

As soon as the nurse had fairly recovered from her hysterics, the explanation that she gave of the matter was this: That a young man, a pedlar, with jewellery and silks, came to the back or carriage gates, while an organ-man, much about the same time, came to the large open-work iron front gates. That having tried these and found they were safely locked, she left the little earl standing looking through the interstices of the iron foliage at the dancing figures on the organ, while she went for a moment to buy some little trinkets of the pedlar. She boldly asserted that she did not stay with him two minutes, but she admitted that when she returned to the front gates the little earl was gone, and that the organ-man was gone; but, finding the gates still locked, she concluded, as a matter of course, that her charge had gone round to the front of the house on the lawn, and was all safe.

The morning of another day of misery passed on—another night succeeded—a fresh dawn broke, and in all this time the marquis had never taken off his clothes, had scarcely closed his eyes; but all his efforts to trace his son had ended where they began—in utter obscurity.

Unfortunately, all the chief windows of the house looked on the opposite side to that on which the front gate was situated. On the other side of the road was a detached cottage, inclosed in walls; the rest of the country consisted chiefly of market gardens; and the very secluded and rural nature of the position that made it such an agreeable residence in the immediate neighbourhood of London had facilitated that outrage on the little earl of which there was but too great reason to fear that he was the victim.

And while in this agony the marquis pondered on his loss, the threats of Mills suddenly recurred to him.

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Throwing himself into his carriage, with post-horses, he lost not a moment in travelling down to the village of Deer-Glen, and, exhausted and travel-stained, he abruptly burst into the old man's cottage, expecting to find its owner absent, and a very confused account given of his absence. To his consternation, however, there sat old Mills by his fireside, reading a book.

"Where is my son?" hoarsely burst forth the marquis, laying a nervous gripe upon the old man's shoulder.

"Your son, my lord!" said old Mills, looking round him, and staring in the marquis's agitated face. "What has happened to your lordship? Are you gone—"

"Yes, I am; finish your sentence—mad you would say. I am mad; and if you would not have the last remnant of life shaken out of your carcase, tell me what you have done with my son."

Then, as old Mills was about to protest against the charge, "Do not deny it; spare your breath; I know it is you who have caused him to be stolen. What have you done with him? Where have you sent him? Is this some cursed trick of your old slave-dealing habits? Where have you sold him?"

"Be calm, my lord. I pray your lordship to be seated in that chair, and tell me what loss this is. I have heard nothing of it. What has happened to your son?"

"You mocking old fiend! how dare you ask me that question? You know as well as I do that some emissaries of yours have tracked him out in London, and stolen him from my house. You know, and I will know before I leave life in your body, where you or your emissaries have him at this moment."

"What! I, a poor, helpless old man, to plot and kidnap him—a son of the powerful Marquis of Hardheart! My lord, you are jesting. No, do not imagine that my hand is in this. It is the hand of a mightier than I, my lord. Reflect upon the past, my lord, and ask yourself, if this really has befallen you, whether it is not a just judgment on you from Heaven for that cruel selfishness that never allowed you to feel for any child but your own, or any parent but yourself. Aye, do not start and frown at me. If you do not like the words I have to utter to you, you can leave this humble cottage, and go back to your lordly hall. If

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you wait till I seek you, you will wait a long time. I do not fear your anger. There is nothing left to me here that would make me value life, or fear your violence."

Lord Hardheart drew back his hand from the person of old Mills with an impulsive start, and, staggering to the nearest chair, wiped away the cold drops that bedewed his forehead; then looking steadily at old Mills for a few minutes, the hapless peer seemed trying to clear away the mists of passion and despair.

In a few moments a revulsion of feeling came over him.

"Can it be possible, old man, that you know nothing of this?" Then, before Mills could answer him, "Only tell me that this is your doing, and that you will restore me my child, and I will pardon all the past."

"My lord, how can I, a poor, helpless, humble, old, poverty-stricken creature, crumbling into the grave, be of any use to a nobleman in your exalted position?"

"Cease this cant! If you wanted revenge, you have had it. Take it. If that is not enough for you, name your price. Only give me back my son, and anything in reason that my fortune can bear I will pay you."

"Your lordship is very generous," said old Mills, suddenly rising from his chair; "but there is one particular price—a service which I want to have done me; and if your lordship will do that, I will find your son directly."

"Name it," replied the marquis. "It is yours."

"Stay, my lord. Here is a pen and ink," said old Mills. And sitting down, he proceeded to make a memorandum. "First, your lordship will restore me my own son—"

"I will do what I can," said the marquis. "I will go to the Home Office to-morrow morning."

"Good!" said old Mills; "but that is not all. Next, you must restore me my daughter, pure and innocent as she was when her voice was the joy and life of this humble dwelling; not the impure outcast you were the cause of her becoming. Next, restore to my son his young and blooming wife, and—"

"You scoundrel, you are paltering with me!" said the marquis, suddenly interrupting him, and grasping at his throat, to

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seize him; but, with an energy for which the nobleman was not prepared, the old man tripped up the table in his lordship's path, and while the marquis, stumbling over it, endeavoured to regain his footing, old Mills slipped out of the door into an inner room, and bolted it behind him.

In vain the marquis thundered at the door for admission. In a few minutes a recollection of his position returned to him, and, hastening off to the nearest magistrate, he caused a warrant to be issued for the old man's apprehension, and in the evening of the same day he was brought before Mr. Twaddle Toady.

However, with all Twaddle Toady's ingenuity, Mills obstinately refused to say a word. The marquis could depose to nothing, and that evening had the mortification of seeing once more at liberty the man to whom he was quite convinced he owed the irreparable injury of losing his son, without any remedy being left him but that of raving on the diabolical revenge of Mills; while—strange inconsistency—he utterly forgot the irremediable ills by which he himself had evoked this fiendish feeling.

Day after day now elapsed, and still no tidings of the young earl came to hand, though search after search had been multiplied without end.

The unhappy father, unable to endure the sight of Hampden House, where the great object of his life had been snatched from his enjoyment, no sooner approached its threshold than he again forsook it, and sought to bury himself in retirement at Deer-Glen. Stung by remorse, and despair only deepened by solitude, he no sooner reached Deer-Glen than he once more hastened back to town; and thus, hardly knowing what course to take, and equally miserable in all, his life soon became a continual torment to him. In vain the police used their utmost efforts; in vain the marquis promised the most unbounded rewards, and spent large sums in causing his agents to scour the kingdom in search of his child. Recourse was had to every expedient save that of advertising; and from this, unfortunately, his pride recoiled. In the midst of this protracted agony of suspense and despair came a small dirty letter

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in an illiterate handwriting, with a host of other correspondence, in the mail-bag one morning, to Deer-Glen. The marquis vacantly opened every letter but that. For some time it lay unnoticed on the breakfast-table, where all his previous habits had become so altered that he often sat vacantly absorbed in a stupor of misery for hours together. It was evidently from some poor person—perhaps a petition, perhaps begging for money; it was very doubtful whether he would open it at all. At last the idea struck him it might relate to his son.

With trembling hands he snatched up the soiled missive, and, easily breaking the fastening, his whole frame vibrated with agitation as he beheld one of the long silken tresses of his lost child fall out upon the ground.

To seize it and press it to his lips, to thrust it into his bosom next to his heart, was the work almost of an instant; and then he read, in the bad spelling and ignorant scrawl, the following words:—

"My Lord,—This comes hoping you won't concern yourself about your son, who is now in Scotland; and to show the care we takes of him for your sake, we has inoculated him with the small-pox, which he has took beautifully. There is a very good cow-doctor attends him, as the disease is very severe, and fixed in his left I; but cow-man says he will not lose the sight of both I—only the one where the lids most likely will close, and grow together. In all other respects he will be none the worse, only marked pretty deep in the face. The boy wishes to see you night and day, if he could. We suppose it is you he means, as he is allays calling 'Willie, Willie;' so I writes this for your comfort. As it is not convenient for you to come here, we sends you a lock of his 'air. Has soon as the boy recovers, great care shall be taken in the teaching, lying, thieving, and drinking specially; so that when you meets again, what with small-pox, and what with 'complishments, your young un will be so improved, you will not no 'im.

"So no more at present from your well-wisher,

"Hookey Walker."

The agony of despair into which this detestable missive

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threw the marquis surpassed all depicting. The servants who were with him described him as perfectly insane, despatching messengers to London for the police, and a messenger for his medical attendant; the former found him quite incoherent when they arrived, and the latter found him suffering under the incipient fever of frenzy.

When the medical man read the letter, he disbelieved the statements it contained *in toto*, but still, as a matter of precaution, he revaccinated the marquis.

The step, however, was too late, and the intelligence of the letter proved too true.

Before a week elapsed after Lord Hardheart's receipt of the epistle, he was covered with the most frightful eruptions of the small-pox, and raving under all the fearful delirium of that appalling disease.

The superintendent of police hurried with the letter into Scotland, and traced it through all the offices of which it bore the mark until he arrived in Glasgow; but in no part of the journey could he hear of anything that afforded him the slightest clue to the discovery of the missing heir.

As far, therefore, as their judgment would lead them, it appeared to be true that the unfortunate child was ill somewhere with the small-pox, and that the lock of hair had conveyed the disease to his father, who not only had kissed it, but could not be induced to part with its possession. In all probability the assertion that he was in Scotland was merely an artifice to mislead the peer as to his actual residence, and so indeed it really was; and now, while the unfortunate marquis, raving under the double effects of disease and grief, hovers on the confines of life and death, insanity and despair, let us see what was the real treatment experienced by his only child.

CHAPTER IX.

A FEW days after the Marquis of Hardheart had taken possession of Hampden House, a tall and good-looking young man, in the dress usually worn by pedlars, and bearing the customary box, full of showy and trashy trinkets, made his appearance at

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the front gates. For some time he remained unnoticed while he stood gazing into the grounds.

The little Earl of Hopemore, delighted at the novelty of change, was amusing himself playing with his nurse, who assisted him to transport sundry roots and flowers which the gardener allowed him to dig up with his spade, and wheel in his wheelbarrow.

After staying some time unnoticed at the gate, the pedlar went away. The next day, at the same hour, he appeared again. On the previous day the nurse took no notice of him.

On the second day, watching his opportunity, he dropped a few words of that coarse flattery which people in his class so well know how to employ. The damsel bought some trifling article and away he went, but not before he had asked her if she would like a very great bargain in silks, a most beautiful silk dress which had been smuggled; and though told it was not wanted, a day or two afterwards he made his appearance with the dress in question; and while he stood at the gate tempting the servant with it, the butler passed through, letting himself in with the key.

"I think this ring fits your finger, sir," said the pedlar, addressing the butler with a Jew's accent, and holding out a very flashy mock diamond between his finger and thumb in an attitude which seemed to invite a trial of the ring.

The butler was caught in an instant. Extending out his little finger with all the dignity peculiar to butlers, the Jew placed the ring upon the extended digit; but that was not all.

The butler thought the Jew was only busy trying to sell the ring, but the Jew all the while had a very different object, which he perfectly effected—namely, of taking a most scrutinising glance of the key of the gate which the butler held in his hand.

"Not a bad fit, Moses," said the butler. "What's the price of it?"

"Sheep, sir, two guineas."

"Two guineas; monstrous! You mean ten shillings."

"Ah, sir, you are too hard. You shall have it for one guinea."

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"No, Moses; I will give you twelve shillings for it."

"Ah, sir, you are too hard; but perhaps you will deal again—you shall have it."

The money was paid, the ring adopted, and both parties parted well satisfied, the nursery-maid declaring that she could not afford the silk, and the gallant Jew proffering to give her credit for it if she chose to accept the accommodation.

This being declined, Moses went on his journey.

That night, or rather on the following morning about two o'clock, the mock pedlar, though in a different dress, might have been seen stealing on tiptoe to the iron gate, trying the lock with a false key.

With the least possible noise the key was inserted, the lock turned, the gate opened, closed again, and the bolt of the lock shot back into its place. In another instant the pedlar had vanished.

A day or two afterwards the accommodating pedlar once more presented himself with the silk dress, but this time he walked in at the carriage-gates of the back yard; and presenting himself at a side-door which communicated with the fore court, the nursemaid, who by this time had come to regard him as a trustworthy acquaintance, left her charge, as has been already stated, and went to discuss the important question of the silk dress.

At this moment up came an organ-man, with his dancing automata; and then, as if attracted by his sweet music, a butcher-boy, dressed in blue, with his light cart and swift trotting mare, stopped close by to listen.

The little earl, attracted by the automata, was at the gate in a few seconds. A man who accompanied the organ looked through the open work bars, and, seeing no one with the earl, slipped a false key into the lock, unlocked it, withdrew the key, and left the gate standing open, after which he retired behind the organ.

The poor little earl, delighted to find himself able to walk out, came up to the extreme verge of the gate, lingered for a moment, and then, as the organ-man stooped down to show him the dancing images to greater perfection, his child-like eagerness got the better of his timidity, and he stepped out into the road.

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The organ-man now began to dance. The child, still more delighted, clapped his hands and laughed. In a few minutes he was quite at home; and the organ-man skiltully inserting himself between the child and the gate, the latter was adroitly closed by the confederate, once more locked, and now all that remained was to get the child off without a noise.

"Is not that a pretty whip, my boy?" said the young butcher, giving the handle into the hand of the little earl.

The boy said nothing, but waving it backwards and forwards for a moment or two, smiled with pleasure as he contemplated the delight of owning it.

"Would you like a little drive," said the butcher-boy, "before your nurse comes back? Would not that be fun?"

"Oh, yes," said the earl, clapping his hands with insensate mischief at the idea of giving the nurse a hunt for him.

"Jump up, then, quick," said the butcher's lad. "Here, you help him, Tom."

Tom, who was the organ-grinder's assistant, placed his arms round the little earl's waist, and lifted him into the cart, still holding on the whip, while the organ-man himself placed his instrument on the tail of the vehicle, jumped in too, making a party of four.

"Now, then, master, give the horse a cut."

The child, delighted to exercise the whip, did as he was bid, and in an instant off started the horse straight down the unfrequented road that led to the neighbourhood of Fulham.

The whole thing had been so accurately planned, and so swiftly executed, that before the nursemaid had an opportunity of remarking that the music of the organ was stopped, the horse and cart, conveying her master's son and heir, was nearly out of sight, even from the windows of Hampden. At last, as it approached the low neighbourhood of Fulham, while the child was still clapping his hands and full of delight at the rapidity of the drive, and no doubt thinking of the dismay of his nurse missing him, the organ-man who sat behind him suddenly whipped the green baize cover of the organ over the child's head, and, dragging him back into the body of the cart, at once stifled his cries, hid him from view, and terminated his

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short-lived enjoyment in a captivity the most cruel and unrelenting.

Now that the deed was done, all the parties concerned in it awoke to a consciousness of the danger they had incurred, and the necessity for carrying out to the utmost the desperate enterprise on which they had entered.

"Gag his mouth, Tom," cried the driver, "so that he cannot be heard. We must go quietly by the corner of North End."

"Aye, aye," said Tom, "he is only kicking; he cannot speak now."

"All right, Tom," returned the driver; and, as he said this, he pulled up his horse, and went at a very moderate pace between the two detached houses that stand one on each side of the road—one of them having been the country mansion of Sir Peter Lely, in the reign of Charles the Second, and the other houses of the neighbourhood being of the lowest description.

In a few minutes these were also passed. Once more the whip was applied, the reins were loosened, and on flew the steed.

The next house they passed was a madhouse, called Norman House, a curious old building, completely shut in within its high and mouldering walls, but in their crumbling grandeur made to speak of the vanished pleasures of some grandee who might have held his villa there in remote centuries.

Under the gloomy boundaries of this mansion, perforated and covered in every direction with the vacant nail-holes intended to direct the growth of fruit-trees which had long since been rotten, the depredators hurried on their steed until they came, by wild and sequestered paths, to the great western road.

All that night they continued their course, branching off towards the north. During the day-time some secluded spot was chosen, into which they drove their cart, and loosening the horse from his harness, they fed him upon the growing crop of grass, or the plundered haystack, as each presented itself most readily, until in a few days they had conveyed their charge, despite of all his tears and lamentations and vain struggles, to that vast mart of industry and haunt of crime, the teeming city of Manchester, in the lowest and most secluded

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locality of which they arrived about ten o'clock in the evening; and the stolen heir was transferred, more dead than alive with starvation, fatigue, fright, and sorrow, from his bundle of straw in the cart to that hideous spot which was to be the future bedroom of the hitherto petted and adored heir of the most noble the Marquis of Hardheart!

CHAPTER X.

"Now, you young beggar! get in there and sleep for the night," said the driver of poor Eustatius, placing him at the bottom of a flight of steps down which he had carried him, and opening a cellar-door where the steps terminated, and into which the light almost refused to enter as it fell from the little bit of dip candle that he held in his hand.

"Oh, not there! not there!" shrieked the poor child, clinging to the knees of the man, and shrinking back aghast from the dark and foul-smelling abyss that seemed to yawn before him.

"Get in there, you beggar! I say, and none of your squalling. You will find it soft and comfortable; so lie down and sleep for the night."

"Not there! not there!" again shrieked the child, till the driver, violently seizing his shoulder, wrenched him away from his knee, pitched him bodily into the cellar, and, locking the door so that his screams could not be heard, ran up stairs laughing and swearing, leaving, at every step more and more faintly heard, below the agonising wail of the deserted little earl.

"Now, Mother Redcap, go out and get us a quart of gin, and buy us some regular good jolly blow-out for supper," said the ruffian, throwing down in the middle of the miserable den called a parlour the key of the cellar below, and then tossing a sovereign on the table.

"Well, Tom, you have come back flush of cash, surelye. Shall I get rump-steak and ingans, or will 'e have ayster-sarce. Where did you get that young un you have just brought home?"

"Bought him, mother, for five bob on the road 'twixt this and London."

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"He is rather young, ain't he? Did you say you would have ingans with your steak, or shall I try for some aysters?"

And while this was the careless and indifferent manner in which this specimen of the soft sex beheld the incarceration of the helpless Eustatius, let us for a moment inquire what was the kind of apartment in which the hitherto tenderly lodged Earl of Hopemore was condemned to pass his existence.

When he first felt himself hurled from the knee to which he vainly clung, he expected to find himself dashed against the hard pavement, and, perhaps, poor little creature! to fall some considerable depth.

In both respects he was in error; the depth that he descended was only a few feet, and, instead of falling on the hard stone, he felt his descent arrested by some soft substance, which at the very moment of his striking seemed to fly up and fill his mouth and eyes, causing him to be almost suffocated.

This was, in fact, nothing less than soot.

He had been thrust into the cellar in which it was accustomed to be accumulated until a sufficient quantity was got together to be sold to the farmers for manure; and there, in a mass of it three feet deep, he was left to pass the night without food, and without other clothing than such as he had on.

After vainly attempting to extricate himself by cries to his kidnappers, the poor little fellow bethought himself, as he had often done, of calling on his father. "O Willie! Willie! Where are you, Willie?" but no father's protecting hand could reach him there. The marquis had become less powerful for the guardianship of his son than even the vile sweep who sat carousing overhead, and, after half an hour's wailing and despair, the poor child sank down exhausted in silence.

As soon as his own cries had ceased, he became conscious of some other child being in this desperate den, and murmuring in the low tone of sickness, "Jem, is that you?" At first Eustatius was frightened at hearing this voice, but he soon became assured it was a child; and by degrees, as the eye became accustomed to the darkness, the light of the stars shining down through the grating of the cellar enabled him to discern something like a human being in one corner.

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In a few minutes he summoned courage to say, "What is it?"

And the voice replied, "Can you reach me the water, Jem, I am so thirsty?"

Drawing by degrees gently over to the corner, there Totty found a little *climbing-boy* prostrate from some sickness, and near him a broken jug, to which he was pointing.

"Is this the water?" said the little earl, "that you want?"

"Yes," hoarsely muttered the sick boy.

Reaching it over to him as well as he could in the dark, Eustatius gave the poor child the liquid to drink, and asked him what was the matter.

"A dreadful pain in my head," said the poor boy. "Where is master?"

But this query Eustatius was wholly unable to answer. He had, however, a question to put in return, and, stooping very close to the little boy, he said—

"How can I get back to my papa?"

"Where is he?" said the other boy.

"At home," said Eustatius.

"Where is your home?"

"I do not know," said Eustatius; and the thoughts of that far away home proving too much for him, he sat down by the little invalid's side, and, leaning over his breast, burst once more into a paroxysm of grief and tears.

What with the exposure and the long journey that he had suffered, the poor little fellow soon went fast asleep; and the other child, who had already gone through this horror and degradation, felt consoled at having a companion in his misery, and forbearing to awake him, in this position they were found together some hours afterwards, when the cellar-door was slowly opened, and that villanous-looking old hag, Mother Redcap, her eyes bleared with soot, and her steps unsteady from drink, a large pair of scissors in one hand, a bundle of dirty, sweep-boy's clothes thrown over her arm, and a small yellow candle in her grasp, entered the cellar, looking round with a sort of maudlin cunning for her prey.

"Where be ye got to, ye young varmint?" she kept muttering to herself. "Come here, I say, and let me cut those

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long curls off;" but poor Eustatius slept too soundly to hear her croaking voice, and had dreams too sweet for such a hideous vision.

After going round in turn to every corner of the cellar, she at last espied the two children.

"Oh, there you be, both of ye, be ye? Why, Ben, ye dunghili bred! you should not have let the boy come near ye. Don't you know you have got the small-pox? He'll be a-catching of it next."

"I could not help it, mother—I could not tell who it was in the dark."

As the little sweep said this he slowly moved himself up, with his back against the wall, and gazed with wonderment at the beautiful long silky curls of the young earl, still sleeping on his knee, his arms thrown gently forward against the wall, the blue velvet dress, with its silver buttons and laced frills and ruffles, soiled as they were, contrasting strongly with the awful squalor of that abominable den.

"Well, it is too late to help it now, I s'pose. If he does catch it, there is one thing, he will be the more difficult to find out," she muttered to herself. "This boy was not bought for five bob, though, Master Tom; nobody would be such a fool as to sell such a bargain as that—I shall get more money for his hair from the barber, I know." As the old woman said this, she fixed her end of tallow candle in a crevice in the wall, and then, groping her way over to poor Eustatius, made one or two clutches at his curls with her left hand, brandishing her scissors in the right.

"Come here, ye young varmint! How difficult you are. Come here, I say; do you hear, when I speak to you?" and every time she made a futile endeavour to get hold of the child's head. At last her long, black, skinny fingers caught hold of Totty's curls; and as her unsteady footing gave a reel at the same moment, the poor boy, startled out of his sleep by the severe pain thus inflicted upon him, and waking, beheld this horrid hag in this attitude.

To burst out into a dreadful scream was the most natural impulse of a little creature so circumstanced; but having

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never been educated to fear anything, and possessing from nature a high courage, the first thing Eustatius did was to roar out—

"Let go my hair!"

"Let it go, ye little gallus bird! Stand still, I say, that I may cut it off."

"You shan't cut it off!" roared Eustatius, stamping with mingled emotions of rage and surprise.

"I shan't! You talk in that sort of way to me?" said the old woman, striking at him with the closed scissors. "I will precious soon teach you that you must knock under."

The blow of the old hag fortunately failed of its mark, by her scissors falling in the act; but she twisted her hand round the hair of Eustatius, and dragged him violently towards her.

"Let go my curls! let go my curls!" roared the boy, his natural spirit rebelling against this treatment, and the excessive pain stirring him up to defend himself to the utmost.

Unaccustomed to be touched by his nurses, and perhaps the more emboldened from seeing he had only an old woman to deal with, the boy flew at her with uplifted hands and feet, kicked her severely in the shins, and gave her such a slap on the face as made the old fiend reel again.

"You will, ye varmint, you will?" repeated the old woman, pulling at his hair with all her force; while the child, screaming with agony, redoubled his cries and blows, until the old woman, releasing her hold, staggered back, somewhat startled at such symptoms of rebellion in one so young.

"Oh, you young vagabond! this is it, is it?" said she, looking about for her lost implement. "I wish I had not let drop the scissors; I would have cracked your little crown for ye, you may rely upon it. You have come to the right place, you have, to get the devil taken out of ye, I can tell ye. We'll precious soon see whether such a little cockatrice as you is to give yourself these airs. Here, Tom!" said the old woman, going to the cellar-door, and calling up, "here, Tom!"

"What is it, you old hag?" answered a deep gruff voice

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from above. "What the blazes are you making that precious row about down there? Do you want to call in the police?"

"Come down here, Tom, you fool! and bring the brush with you, to give a good hiding to this young cockatrice. He won't have his hair cut off, and he won't let me come near him."

A burst of oaths was the only answer to this adjuration; and in a few minutes, staggering from inebriety, in burst the master chimney-sweeper, Tom—a brutal, powerful-looking wretch as anyone might dread to see getting hold of a poor helpless child like the young earl. In his right hand he held one of those angular sweeps' brushes with which everyone is familiar; and looking round the cellar, as he burst into it, he said—

"What is this I hear, you young thief, you? Let us have no more noise directly. Strip your clothes off and put on these," taking from old Mother Redcap's arm the revolting ragged apparel of a diseased sweep-boy, and throwing them down on the soot before Eustatius.

Poor Eustatius made no reply, but went on passionately crying,

"Stop that row, you young scamp, and take your clothes off. I say, directly, and put on those clothes there."

"I won't," said Eustatius, stamping on the soot and shaking his lovely curls in the face of the drunken sweep, with all the courage of a hero, and, alas! with as great a want of success as is too often the fate of heroism. "I won't put on those filthy clothes; and if you don't instantly take me home, my papa will punish you."

"Your papa, you young gutterling! Who is your papa I should like to know?" said the drunken sweep in a jeering, laughing, triumphant tone. "What is your name?" Then, as Eustatius made no reply, "Can't you tell your papa's name?"

"His name is Willie, and he never will let me be treated in this wicked, horrid way."

"But don't you know what his name is beyond Willie?"

"No, I do not; but I know that he will punish you for doing this to me."

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"What is your name?" said the sweep, trying to see how far the poor child possessed the power of escaping from the awful lot they were heaping on him.

"My name is 'Statius."

"But have you no other name than 'Statius?"

The child paused in his crying for a moment, as if trying to recollect himself, and then, as if feeling himself in error, yet unable to remember how or explain why, he lifted up his little hands above his head and cried out, "O Willie! Willie! come to me, Willie!"

"None of your Willying here, you little brute! take your clothes off directly. Stop that rowing—take your clothes off and put on those I have tossed you."

"I won't, I won't!" once more said the child.

"Then take that," said the sweep, lifting his brush and dealing a furious blow right upon the child's face, which struck him, screaming and helpless, to the ground; then, as if infuriated by this act of brutality, the chimney-sweeper darted forward, caught one of the child's feet in his right hand, lifted him up from the soot, and then dashed his head violently against it.*

"Stop, stop, Tom," said the old hag; "you will finish him right off, and we shall have a case of crowner's 'quest if you don't take care."

"You be hanged, you old witch!" said the ruffian, making a kick at her. "What did you call me down for if you did not want me to settle him?" Then turning his back on the helpless infant, he staggered, cursing, up the stairs once more.

Senseless, and for the moment looking almost dead, poor Eustatius lay, with his mouth wide open, vainly endeavouring to recover breath enough to cry. Taking advantage of this opportunity, old Mother Redcap, stooping down over him while still in this inanimate state, turned him over on her knee and cut off, one after another, all those long, silken, glossy ringlets which had so often been the pride and delight of the marquis, as that unfeeling man but doating father had danced his heir on his knee, and concentrated on the person of his own child

* For evidence of this outrage, see Question and Answer No. 222, of the evidence before the Lords' Committee, in Appendix.

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that love and affection some portion of which was, at least, due to the rest of mankind.

In a few seconds the child's breath sufficiently returned to utter a most piercing scream.

"Stop, stop, you little fool!" cried the old woman, cramming her black, sooty hand before his mouth, and almost stifling him. "If you carry on in that way, Tom will come down again and knock the lief out of you." But all these admonitions were vain. The pain and anguish beneath which the child was suffering were past the control of reason, and shriek after shriek he poured forth whenever the old woman took her hand away from his lips.

"Well, if you will cry, you must then," said she, rising from her posture beside him and staggering over to the cellar-door, which she shut, that the sweep above might not hear the noise.

Then returning to the still prostrate figure of the child, she, in a few minutes, removed his beautiful dress and put upon him a pair of corduroy trowsers, three or four sizes too big, all in holes with the wear of two previous years and three or four previous owners, and thoroughly indurated, of course, with soot, and a wretched cotton ragged shirt to match, so torn that the skin showed white through it in several places.

"This won't do—this won't do," muttered the old hag as she gazed on the evident proclamation that poor Eustatius was a very recent addition to her calling; and, gathering up a handful of soot, she rubbed it all over the face, and neck, and hair of poor Eustatius—too insensible, alas! from pain to offer any resistance; and having thus fully transformed this angel of light into a child of darkness, she carefully gathered up his severed tresses and valuable clothes, and, having accomplished her fiendish errand, left the hopeless victim of it to despair.

Alas! what a situation was this for the heir of an English marquis—that tenderly nursed and exquisitely beautiful little being whom the winds of heaven had never been allowed to visit too roughly—to be left in such a state, in such a den, after a long journey, without even the commonest article of food! Where, now, are all those luxuries and comforts that had been heaped

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around him through his past life? Where was his ample and refreshing bath, his gentle and attentive nurses, his spacious chamber, his horsehair-stuffed and lace-covered pillow, the endless service of domestics, with no other duty than to wait upon him? Where, more than all, was that doating and distracted father who, it is no exaggeration to say, would have given his right hand to have saved him from such a lot?

Alas! alas! between him and them there was a great gulf fixed, indeed! How should it be spanned? When and where, if ever, in this world should the maddened father and the despairing child be united? and through what amount of misery and torture should they both have to pass before the arrival of that day, should it ever be permitted to dawn?

CHAPTER XI.

Few things in this life are more calculated to humble mankind than the reverses of fortune which we constantly behold around us.

When we contrast all that the Earl of Hopemore was but a few days since with his situation described in the last chapter —when we consider how splendid and apparently cloudless were his prospects, and how suddenly, without any fault of his own, poor child! he was hurled into the depths of misery, degradadation, filth, despair—short-sighted man is almost tempted to doubt whether such abrupt changes can possibly go forward in the world; or, if experience has taught us how constantly they take place around us, the mind is almost tempted to inquire how these things can be permitted by an all-merciful and overruling Providence, or, at least, permitted without deep punishment falling on the guilty heads of those concerned in them. But we must all remember the passage in Scripture, "It must needs be that offences come, but woe be to him through whom the offence cometh;" and though our vision is too limited and too clouded in this life to observe and trace each step in the path of Providence, none can doubt the perfect wisdom with which those steps are directed.

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Through all that night the little earl continued to groan, and cry, and sob. Alas! no one attended to him. Whether he lived or died seemed a matter of perfect indifference to everyone in the den into which he had fallen; and when the early beams of the sun shot down into that hideous cellar, the poor child was still awake, groaning beneath violent pains in the back and loins, suffering under a dreadful nausea, his skin and throat parched with drought, and every now and then making futile attempts to vomit.

About seven o'clock the old hag, Mother Redcap, once more entered the cellar, and with her an old man about sixty, dressed in a square sort of sporting-coat, the pockets of which seemed well filled with sundry implements.

"I wish it was over one way or the other, doctor," grumbled the old woman; "I am tired of having sick children.'

"Well, it is very likely to be over the other way very soon, I can tell you, for this is the eleventh day; and if the boy is not better than when I saw him last night, he won't trouble you long. Who is this you have got here? Why, here is *another* boy!"

"Yes, doctor, there is another."

"You should not have brought him down here: he is sure to catch it. Do you think he has touched the other child?"

"Yes, I'm sure he has touched un, for I found un fast asleep on un last night."

"Why, you will never get out of your bothers this way. If, as fast as one child dies, you bring another down, he is sure to have it."

As the cow-doctor said this, he advanced to the corner where the poor sweep was lying, and began shaking his head.

"What is the matter, doctor?"

"Do you see the eruption how flat it has got down?"

"Yes, I see the pimples has got very flat."

"That is a sign he is going."

Then taking the child's hand into his own fingers, "No more pulse here than a cabbage-stalk has got—I suppose you arn't been able to get for him that wine I spoke of yesterday."

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"Well, doctor, there was an old lady sent a little wine here yesterday—did it come from you?"

"Yes. I mentioned the poor boy's case to William Wood, the Quaker, and he said he would send some wine to you; but this child has never had it, I'll swear, by his pulse."

"Why, you see, doctor, it *is* difficult to get wine down into the cellar here. There is Tom—he sits generally in the parlour, and says wine is good for his complaint."

"What! and did the vagabond drink the poor child's wine?"

"Well, doctor, *I* had not much of it, I 'sure you."

"Well, it is too late now. He is going."

"Well, I thought he looked very like it when I seed him this moment."

"It is no use talking about it, poor boy! his troubles is over. Who is this fresh one you have got?"

"Well, it is a boy Tom bought somewhere up the country. He came home late at night, and was sent down here to sleep without us thinking of his catching it."

"Here, my little fellow," said the doctor, "how do you feel this morning? Have you got a pain anywhere?"

"Yes," said Eustatius.

"Where?"

"In my back and in my stomach, and I am very cold and I am very sick."

"Ah, he has got it, sure enough."

"What is best to be done?"

"What can you do in such a den as this? The best thing you can do is to send the child to the hospital; but I told you that with the last."

"Why, doctor, it is of no use telling *me* about hospitals; I tell 'ee hospitals is above us. They won't let sweeps go into hospitals. Folks to get into hospitals, you know, as well as I must, have decent clothes and a change or two of linen.* Our poor children might much more easily try to make their way into heaven than into an hospital."

"Well, dame, as to your making your way there—excuse

* See evidence before the Lords, Question 883 *et sequitur*, in Appendix.

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me for saying—I doubt it, unless you mend your manners; but I think you are sending these poor children there as fast as you can."

"Well, how can I help that? Poor folks like us must get our livelihood; and if the gentlefolks will not have their chimneys swept by this new fangled machinery, why, in course, they must have boys; and if we must have boys, they must rough it a bit. In a dirty business like ours what can you expect? Be we to wash the boys after every chimney, eighteen or twenty a day? and if they bean't to be washed, where are they to sleep except in such a cellar as this? Why, you ill-mannered old brute! you are only fit to attend cows, you bean't; coming here snacking us with these poor children's deaths! Why don't you go and snack the magistrates?—them's the villains. Why don't you go and snack the great lords?—them's the rascals. Why don't you go and snack the rich mill-owners?—them's the scoundrels, not us poor bodies. It is them rich folks that won't have their chimneys swept by machinery, and will have them climbed by boys, that does the harm and murders the children. It is not us. We is obliged to get our living by any means we can."

"Well, you and the rich must settle it with the devil between you. Such a place as this is more like hell than anything else; and though I am a cow-doctor, you know very well that neither you nor I would keep a cow, if she was sick, in such a den as this, with any hopes of her getting better; but, there, I will send you some stuff for this boy—the other boy is past it, and, I suppose, this one soon will be;" and the doctor, turning his back on his unfortunate patients, made his way up once more to the light of day.

And did this poor dying sweep-child hear this intelligence of approaching death? Was he conscious of it? Alas! who can say? Covered, as the rising day showed him to be, with a mass of eruption, pallid, and sinking into the arms of death, there to find a relief his brother man denied him, unable to read or write, unconscious of a God, and ignorant of the future, it is difficult to say whether this little being, created in the likeness of divinity, was still possessed of sufficient intelligence to comprehend the character of the conversation held over him.

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O consistent English Christians! Spend your millions in missionaries to convert the Pagans; but shut your eyes to the little heathens you raise and slaughter in your own chimneys!

In the course of the day a wine bottle full of Epsom salts, largely diluted with water and a little muriatic acid, was brought down by old Mother Redcap, and placed near the fever-stricken Eustatius, together with a dirty crust or two of bread, that appeared to have been raked from some neighbouring kennel.

"Here, young un," said the old woman, "you may drink as much of this as you like, the doctor says. I s'pose you an't got much appetite; but, if so, here's some nice little crusts for you." Then, going over to the corner where the other lad lay, "I think your troubles is nearly over, Ben;" and lifting up the arm of the dead child—for his spirit had already departed to the Almighty Father that made it in His own likeness—it fell down again with a hollow sound upon the level surface of the soot! Then, as the old woman looked in his face—

"Why, I do declare he has gone—his jaw is quite dropped!" and with her thumb she closed up the yawning aperture of the poor little sweep-boy's mouth, where the white and even teeth still shone through the soot-grimed and fever-cracked lips, and offered a sight of dental beauty that many a duchess would have envied. The moment, however, the old hag's hand was removed, down dropped the jaw again, never more to emit cries of suffering or of pain, or notes, too rarely heard from such a creature, of joy and gladness.

What think you, citizens of America, of the humanity of the Britishers, who can give up their children by the thousand to be systematic victims of such a trade?—a trade wholly unnecessary to exist at all, yet, if allowed to exist in climbing children, then of necessity involving such hideous details!

CHAPTER XII.

On the day following that described in the last chapter, the cow-doctor called once more to see his little patient, and found the dead body of the other boy still lying in the corner unburied.

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"Why, dame," said he, "you should get that boy put under the earth. Of course that corpse lying here will make it the worse for this one."

"Well, never mind about that boy: the workhouse folks are coming here to-night, I believe, to put him in a shell. How is this little chap going on?"

"Well, he is going on much as the other did; but you must come down now and then and give him some drink. Can't you get anything for him to lie on except the soot?"

"Stuff and nonsense, doctor! Why should not the soot do as well as anything else? We cannot find the boys bedding; we've only straw to sleep on ourselves."

"Well, at any rate, come and give him some drink occasionally; because, you see, he is delirious, and he will soon be too weak to help himself. A child like this will never take his medicine without you come and get him to do it. I will send you some more of this drink, and he may have as much of it as he likes. To-morrow, I suppose, the eruption will come out."

Accordingly, on the following day the eruption appeared, and continued to increase till about the eleventh day, during all which time the ill-fated little earl remained lying on the infected soot, with nobody to attend him except old Mother Redcap.

Happily for him, the window of the cellar was open night and day, and so the temperature remained cool and low; while, as it looked directly to the eastward, nothing but the very early ray entered it for an hour, and during the rest of the day it was always in the shade.

During this time, it is true, every morning the sweeps brought in a bag of soot, and deposited it on the level mass, and for a few seconds the particles, flying about, got down the throat of the poor sick, parched child and greatly distressed him, and at all times the strong odour of the soot, which has in it a stimulating and ammoniacal gas, added to the disease, and affected his little eyes; but, notwithstanding all these disadvantages, his original strength of constitution seemed to support the tiny sufferer, and he still dragged through this frightful illness in this most deplorable sick-chamber.

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"Who is it that he keeps calling upon so?" said the doctor, in one of his visits. "Who is this 'Willie! Willie!' that he is still calling out?"

"Does he say 'Willie?'" said the old hag. "I am rather hard of hearing, doctor. I suppose it is some of his old playmates."

"Oh, you be smothered, Mother Redcap! you know who it is well enough, I daresay, if you chose to let it out."

"Who is Willie, my lad, that you want so much? Can I send him to you?"

But the unfortunate child was quite delirious, and wholly unable to comprehend the question, of which he took no further notice than to renew his endless moan, "Dearest Willie, why won't you come to me?"

Giving directions how he should be treated, the cow-doctor again took his departure.

While this was the state of affairs in the cellar, a conversation of a different kind was held that night in the room above.

"I say, old Mother Redcap, when does the doctor say this boy of yours will be ready to put up a chimney?"

"Well, I do not know, Tom, I am sure," replied the woman. "As far as I can see, he is much more likely to be put down in a coffin."

"A coffin! Hang it, you old hag! what bad luck you have with your boys! If you kill them off in this way, you will beggar us. Do you mean to say that we cannot count upon him for work next week?"

"Lor'! no, that I am sure you can't; this is only the eighth day—the pimples bean't ripe till the eleventh; and even if he does not go off like the rest, he will be some time, I can tell you, before he can carry a soot-bag—he will be so weak."

"Well, then, I s'pose there's no help for it but buying another."

"How much is 'em, Tom, apiece—six shillings, is it, or five?"

"Well, five shillings I generally gives; though sometimes I have given as much as seven and a treat of gin."

"Well, but you need not grumble so at the expense. Them cheaper, now, ain't they—these boys be—than a machine?"

"Oh, yes, them a good deal cheaper than a machine. Cuss

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that new Act! If we was to go to buy a machine, it would cost us from thirty shillings* up to three p'und ten; but suppose we could get one for two pounds—which is as much as ever we could—why, look here, you old witch! you might get eight boys at five shillings a head; and that would only be as much as one machine. But that is the way the slegislatur' imposes upon us poor devils. Here we can get as many boys as we like for five shillings a head; and now out comes a new law which says we shan't have them, though the workhouses and parents is always ready to get rid of them at five shillings a head, and makes us go and give two pounds for a machine! I am blowed if I will, for one, while there is a boy to be had in the land for nabbing or buying!"

"Well, but, Tom, you should remember that the machines do not eat anything. So they are cheaper in that way."

"Eat anything, you stupid old creetur! I should like to know when you ever gave any one of our boys anything to eat except the broken victuals they bring home from the houses where they sweep!"

"Well, true; I never thought of that, Tom. Them's rather a saving, even that way, Tom, now I come to think of it; they brings home more broken victuals than they eats, and generally enough for you and I to live on, too. I know, since our boy fell ill with the small-pox, I ha' spent more money at market in one week than I did before in three."

"The market, you old faggot! what do you talk of the market for? How much more do you spend in gin since your boys have been sick, I should like to know? I should think there is never a night, when the boys are in health, that they do not bring you home a shilling or two out of their pences. I never made you book up about that, Mother Redcap; but you please to remember there is very few houses where the boys go to sweep that they do not get twopence, and I know it is very few nights you do not get it out of them. Remember, that is all cut off if we has to take to machines."

"Well, Tom, I did get a penny or two now and then, it is true; but it is not so much for myself that I do not like the

* See House of Lords' evidence, Question 305, in Appendix.

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new Hact for machinery. See what a difference it would make to you! Instead of standing by the hearth, with your hands in your pockets, while the boy sweeps the chimley, look at the hard work of one of them 'ere long machines a-working up and down the chimley at every house you go to!"

"You may say that, mother; it is precious hard work, I can tell you. I have tried one once or twice, and I'm blowed if you gets me to work myself to death in that 'ere way while a boy is to be had for five shillings! I will buy a fresh un to-morrow. But where are we to put un, if that little chap down in the cellar has got the small-pox? It is no use putting him down there, or he will catch it, and then we shall be hung up for want of hands again."

"Well, it is werry inconwenient, that 'ere small-pox. Talking about that, Tom, who was it called here yesterday, and took away the child's clothes and his hair?"

"What is that to you, you hag? Mind your own business!"

"Oh, I did not know whether it was his father."

"If he was his mother, it is no affair of yours. Go out and get me another pot of gatter,* and then cut your lucky to bed."

"It is all very fine for you to talk about bed!" mumbled the old woman as she went along. "A bundle of sooty straw in a corner of a garret hasn't much like a bed about it, Master Tom."

CHAPTER XIII.

On the following morning, Mr. Thomas Burman—such was "Tom's" surname—about the hour of eight o'clock, might have been seen standing at the bar of the Spinning Jenny public-house, treating to gin and bitters one Mrs. Candler, a lady who rejoiced in a marvellously fiery visage, somewhat subdued, but not at all chastened, by a most exuberant exhibition of widow's cap.

"I'll tell you what, Mr. Sweep," said the lady, as she sedulously drained the pewter measure of its last drop. "I must say that I think five shillings for a fine little boy like my son Dick there is rather a small price to give for a sweep."

* That is, "gin."

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"No, marm; I assure you, it is the regular price of the article in our trade."

"Well, but just consider, Mr. Sweep, what a nasty dirty business yours is."

"O Lor', marm, that's only a notion you have got. Every business is dirty while you are at it. It is only a question of a little more soap—that is one reason why we cannot give so much for the boy—it costs so much in soap."

"Soap be bothered!—you soaps none. Soft soap you may be well off for, and soft sawder, but I never saw one in your line as ever was washed; and then consider, too, the danger to the poor children. Why, there was a poor child burned to death in Mr. Spindle's factory, just round the corner there, last week—regularly broiled to death, and constantly you hears of them being suffocated. I think, Mr. Sweep, five shillings is a very small sum to give for my boy Dick when you considers what he is going to."

"Well, marm, I do not know as you can sell him for more anywhere else at his age; but if you think you can, you know, why, you had better get a higher price for him elsewhere—perhaps he isn't no expense to you to keep at home."

"You be blowed!" said the widow, looking very savagely. "At any rate, Mr. Sweep, you'll stand another pint of gin, I suppose?"

"Well, I've no objection to pay for it, but I can't stay to drink it; so I suppose I may take Dick off with me?"

"Well, order the gin first. Here, Dick, my boy, come and let us give you a kiss."

Dick, who seemed in no way inclined to take to the sweep's calling, came up very reluctantly to give his mother the kiss, looking suspiciously at the hideous and grimy countenance of the chimney-cleaner, Tom Burman, and by degrees Dick approached his mother.

Bending her head down, she whispered in his ear, "Dick, my boy, cut your stick as fast as you can the moment the sweep goes to take hold of you." And then she exclaimed aloud, "God bless you, my boy! mind you be a good boy now, and respect your new master and all that kind of thing."

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"Here, Dick, my boy, give us your hand," said the sweep, holding out his left hand to the child, while with the right he was fumbling in his pocket for the money to pay for another pint of gin.

"Another pint of gin, miss, if you please," said the widow to the young woman behind the bar.

"Money, marm, please?"

"Mr. Sweep stands treat, miss."

"Money, sir, if you please?" holding out her hand to him.

But the sweep just at this moment was otherwise engaged. He had got hold of Dick's hand in his; but suddenly wrenching his paw out, Dick gave him a violent kick in the shins, vanished out of the gin-palace in an instant, crying "Walker!" at the same time, and holding up his two hands to his nose and twirling round one of them like the handle of an organ.

"What, Mr. Sweep, won't my boy go with you? Well, I never!" cried the widow in well-simulated surprise, that did not, however, take in the acute "Tom."

"Why, you lying hag of brimstone!" bawled the latter in a rage, "it is my belief you told the boy to cut off. You have done me out of my gin anyhow, but just swallow that, you brazen-face brute!" and before the woman could get out of his reach he dealt her a blow with his fist which laid her bleeding on the floor.

"Well, that is a nice sort of master to apprentice a boy to!" cried one or two of the bystanders, turning and raising up the unfortunate woman, while Mr. Burman made himself scarce with almost as much expedition as the widow's son; in a few minutes, by doubling round one corner after another, Tom had got beyond the cry of "police," and, considering himself in comparative security, sought out another quarter of the town much frequented by people of his calling.

"Well, Tom Burman, how are you?" said some rough voice as he passed one of these horrid courts.

"Purty well," said Tom. "What are you after?"

"Anything you like, Tom. I'll come and liquor with you if you'll stand, Sam."

"I've had enough of standing, Sam, this morning. I got a

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orute of a vidder voman at the Spinning Jenny agreed to sell me her son for five bob; and arter walking into my gin to no end of time, the old brute whispered the boy to cut his lucky just as I was going to down with the dumpy. She tried to do me out of a second pint, but I gave her one for her nob she won't forget in a hurry."

"Sarve her right, too, Tom."

"My eye, she did go down so pretty! and the claret, too, it flew about! I bet a penny she's got some cherry-coloured flowers in her widow's cap by this time."

"Sarve her right; but I say, Tom, are you looking out for a boy?"

"Yes, I be; have you got one to sell?"

"Well, I don't much care if I do sell you one. What'll you stand?"

"Well, I did think about four bob and a pint o' gin."

"Pint o' gin's all well enough; but I cannot let un go under five shillings—he has fetched that price four times before he come to me."

"Is he a good climber?"

"Well, you shall see un—purty well."

"Is he strong?"

"Well, I don't know about strong; you know our work soon knocks the strength out of them."

"How many chimneys a day can he go up?"

"Well, I never axes him how many he can do. I takes the short road, and makes him do all that I can get."

"Say twelve chimneys in a morning?"

"He has climbed for me twelve chimneys in a morning, I know, and more too, I dare say, if I counted."

"How old is he?"

"Well, I believe he is about ten."

"Do you know where he came from?"

"Well, I bought a donkey and him at Selby, but I believe he was first sold by his mother at Hull; but I know he has never gone for less than five shillings. I am sure of the price, because I remember I bought a donkey at the same time, and the two together came to every bob I had got. There was thirty bob

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for the donkey and five for the boy, and the chap I bought the donkey of stood the liquoring. Since that, there is one of my sons came up old enough, so I can bring him up in the place and sell the boy to you. You shall have him for what I gave for him and a pint o' gin."

"Well, go and get the boy, then, and I'll give you the gin."

The other sweep went back into the house for a few minutes, and presently he returned, once more followed by a poor, miserable, little creature, called Samuel Whitt, clad in nothing but trowsers and shirt, and these so tattered as scarcely to be decent, every rib in his sides showing through the dirty skin, his eyes red and bloodshot, his whole appearance betokening that of extreme ill health.

"I say, master, you arn't got him in much condition, I think?"

"Why, no; he is a little out of kelter at present, 'cos my missis is so precious stingy; she won't let him have half the broken vittals he brings home. But just let him get a little grub inside him, he'll soon pick up again."

"Well, I think that five bob is a long price for such a poor, little devil as that."

"B'ys is looking up now, you know, there is a new Act passed to make us sweep with machines. We shall have a difficulty presently to get boys at five shillings, for these cussed Quakers and other 'umanity-mongers will be sending informers about on purpose to carry out the new law."

"They be blo'ed!" said Tom; "let 'em alone, and they'll never be able to touch us."

"Why not, Tom?"

"'Cos, don't you see, we've got all the nobs in the same boat with us. The lords' houses, and the bishops' houses, and the magistrates' houses, and the cotton-spinners' mills and boilers, they all like their chimbleys swept best by boys; and they'll have 'em, too, make what laws you like. Rich people don't care about laws; they haves a pleasure in breaking them, I thinks. It seems to me, in this country, laws was only made to grind down the poor."

"You are right, Tom, my boy; if ever you spoke a true word,

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that's one. If it was only the poor people employed the boys, it would soon come to an end; but I thinks with you, as long as the lords, and the magistrates, and the bishops, and the mill-owners uses them, it won't signify our chawing up one or two now and then, with a bu'nt chimbley, though they doos make such a fuss about it. Well, is it a bargain? Will you have this boy at five shillings, or shall I send him back again?"

"Well, I suppose I must take him. There's your dollar."

"Now, then, you—you stand the gin."

"Well, the liquoring is about the best part of it; so come along. 'Ating is a trouble, you know, my boy, but drinking is none."

"Here, Sam, do you hear? Here is your new master; that is five times, my boy, you've been sold* in the course of your life. You are getting to be quite a wal'able commodity in the market."

"Am I to go home wi' he, sir?"

"Yes, to be sure you are; and as you have no clothes to pack up, you knows, Master Sam, you may just walk along with us as you are."

"Very well, sir; then shall I leave this brush behind?"

"Aye; throw it down through the cellar-door, there."

The little slave being duly purchased and the money paid, threw his brush back into the cellar of his late master; and the gin being all drunk over this British bargain, he followed his new owner, Tom Burman, to that awful den where—helpless, delirious, and deserted—lay the stolen Earl of Hopemore

CHAPTER XIV.

THE course of our story takes us back once more to Deer-Glen Hall, the lordly owner of which scarcely knew himself in the glass when, as soon as returning strength enabled him to make such a demand, he called for the mirror, and surveyed the ravages which disease had made in his countenance. He

* For this fact, see the Lords' evidence, Answer 218, in Appendix.

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seemed from top. to toe to be as scarlet as the ibis; his eyebrows and eyelashes almost obliterated. With an exclamation of horror and despair, he closed his vision against the frightful image that he presented to himself.

"Take it away! take it away! Bring me poison! razors! pistols!—anything; but let me quit this cursed torment! Why was I born? What on earth is worth possessing?"

These and similar impious exclamations of despair were constantly upon Lord Hardheart's lips for weeks together.

Four keepers, experienced in cases of lunacy, watched over him night and day to prevent his doing himself any violence; and though he could scarcely perhaps be termed mad, yet his frenzy approached so closely upon the borders of insanity, it would have been most difficult to say whether he was or was not strictly lunatic: at any rate, his medical attendants did not feel themselves at liberty to act otherwise than give him the benefit of the doubt, to protect his existence from himself.

Though strict orders were given to conceal the state of affairs in the marquis's bedchamber, servants will tattle of matters that concern people of rank and position, and everything which passed by the bedside of the despairing marquis was very speedily known in the village.

If revenge was the passion dearest to Mills' soul—and it is to be feared it was so—he had his glut of it now.

Little did the marquis believe by how direct a channel or by what double treachery the old man obtained intelligence of everything that most distressed his noble enemy. An old proverb tells us that no man is a hero to his valet-de-chambre; and after the miserable story of Courvoissier, it might well be added, few men can put faith in their valet-de-chambre—certainly the Marquis of Hardheart could not. The valet had a great love of gambling on a small scale; and in the seclusion of the Hall, where visitors had never been frequent, and were now more than ever scarce, he found himself unable to indulge this darling vice. The valet also had a great admiration of skilfully-made punch.

Old Mills had ascertained these two weaknesses, contrived to come across the servant, and, asking him to his cottage, pre-

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sented him with some very choice rum, any account of the source of which Mills was rather chary of rendering; and, producing a cribbage-board, Mills offered to play the valet for half-a-guinea a game.

With such a double temptation for his idle hours, of which he had plenty, the valet was skilfully hooked. A very few observations from old Mills drew the valet out on the subject of all households in general, and Lord Hardheat's in particular.

"Ah, sir, if the English aristocracy knew how very small they look to us, their servants, they wouldn't give themselves quite so many airs as they do," said the valet, as he dealt the cards.

"And yet what are they, Mr. Delassour? Just look at this fellow of a marquis. Everybody is dancing attendance upon him like a little monarch to-day. The breath just leaves his ugly carcase, and he is handed over to the undertaker, and there is not one being in the wide world that cares half a button about him from that day forward."

"Yes, Mr. Mills, that is the very thing that is grieving him so. In my opinion, sir, it is not the loss of his son so much altogether that is working him, but it is the knowledge that, if his son does not turn up, his estates and titles will go after his death to some distant cousin, a Miss D'Auberville."

"Ah! tell me about that now, Mr. Delassour. I have heard that the marquis's was one of the few English titles that go in the female line; but I rather doubted that."

"Oh, 'tis quite true, sir. If the marquis had only had a daughter, she would have inherited it—and precious savage he is, I can tell you, whenever he thinks of it. I have heard him in the night crying out when he has not thought of my being in the next room, 'Curse that old hag! to think that her daughter will have my titles and estates after all.'"

"Have you, indeed?"

"Indeed I have, and more than once, when he thought I have been fast asleep; and then wouldn't he swear like a trooper!"

"Well, somebody must have his title and estate. Why shouldn't this lady have 'em, if she is in the right line for 'em?"

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"Oh, there is a desperate feud between them. I heard the whole of it from the valet that was with him before me, who used to read all his lordship's letters—for the marquis is very careless in leaving them about in his pockets."

"Well, then, of course you read them too, don't you?"

"Why, I'm so pressed for time, Mr. Mills, and I haven't much curiosity myself; but now and then a few of the important ones I just skim over."

"You must have rare fun sometimes."

"Oh, I have."

"How do you tell the important ones from the others?"

"Why, you see, I always make a point of bringing the marquis's letter-bag to him every morning, and I just linger in the room for a minute to watch his mug. Whenever he has got something particularly nice or pressing, or a dun insisting upon payment, he always puts it in his breast-pocket; the other letters he will allow to lie about on the mantelpiece. Sometimes he will take the trouble of locking them up in his secretary, but, generally speaking, a day or two afterwards I find them handed about from one coat to another; and either in his dress-coat, or his shooting-coat, or his silk dressing-gown, I am sure to get hold of them at last. But I make a point of never looking at one unless I know he has gone out of the house, for fear he might stumble on me at an awkward moment."

"Ha! ha! What a farce it is to see these poor creatures setting themselves up as of a superior class of humanity!"

"Superior, sir! Why, my impression, Mr. Mills, is that there is not a more ignorant, or a more vulgar, or a more unchristian class in the country, sir, than a great many of these rich and titled people. They never think of anything but themselves, sir; they are truly and perfectly selfish in all their views and feelings; and I put it to you, Mr. Mills, whether selfishness is not the essence of all vulgarity and all ill-breeding. Just pass the punch this way."

"Certainly it is, Mr. Delassour," said old Mills, pushing the punch towards him, with which he helped himself incontinently, notwithstanding his tirade against selfishness.

"Why, Mr. Mills," resumed the valet, "what is Lord Hard-

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heart suffering under at this moment, but the recoil of his own intense selfishness? It is all selfishness his preservation ot game, and the consequences that have flowed from it. I leave you, Mr. Mills, to put the two and two together, you know; you understand what I mean;" and the valet tossed off another glass of punch.

"I understand nothing, Mr. Delassour," said old Mills; "but I can conceive that a sight of men born of wealthy parents, and inheriting titles that keep them in a great degree from mingling with the rest of mankind, and induce them to live in a class by themselves, should come to acquire selfish habits and refined vulgarisms—and that, I fear, is the case with a large portion of the English nobility, and this poor creature of a marquis especially. But surely this sort of thing won't go down in England for long. You will find the rich and titled classes will either have to improve their education and mend their manners, or they will quietly sink into contempt, and the rising mass will speedily acquire more of knowledge than their betters, and, with knowledge, that independence of mind which flows from it."

"Oh, sir, the farce is coming rapidly to an end in this country; I see that quite plain enough. I have been valet in the peerage, Mr. Mills, for many years. You know we Swiss; we like to come over to England, and make a little money, and go back independent. My father was a Swiss valet, I am a Swiss valet, and I can see, year by year, this humbug of title and wealth coming lower and lower; and I attribute it all to their intense selfishness, and want of education, sir. They go to Eton to learn a vast amount of slang. They go to college and incur a great amount of debt, with a little smattering in one or two dead languages; and they have the impudence to think that that is sufficient to put them on a par with men whose lives are spent at hard work, acquiring information and knowledge on every possible subject. They then, by the use of bribery and intimidation, at all borough and county elections, keep every man out of Parliament but their own class. By this means they distribute the government and patronage of the country among their own relations and connexions, and thus

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feed their families on the taxation of the working-classes. I see their game—I read their letters—I hear their talk—I see it all; and I tell you, Mr. Mills, it must all end with the education of the people—it must end in the informed masses despising the rich and ignorant, and all their titles won't save them. Nothing but superior knowledge and superior usefulness can maintain their position."

"Very true, Mr. Delassour. But tell me about the marquis's title going in the female line. You say there has been a quarrel."

"Why, this was it. The marquis's father lived nearly sixty years a bachelor. No one ever supposed he would marry, and he brought up his nephew, Mr. D'Auberville, as his heir, and gave him £3000 a-year at Oxford. Then one bright morning he changed his mind, and married a very pretty young girl of eighteen, and the year afterwards my lord was born; and the poor nephew, who hoped for the title and estates, is bound to whistle for them."

"Well, then, that is nothing more than he could expect."

"It was a great deal more than he did expect; for, being allowed £3000 a-year, he found that this was not half enough, and got £10,000 or £12,000 in debt to the money-lenders, and contracted habits of expense that have kept him under water all his life. Well, before the bubble of his expectations burst, he fell in love with the celebrated beauty, the Honourable Miss Finchley; and because the settlements could not be drawn up quite as her father wanted them, he ran away with her. The Finchley beauty was a regular tartar; and when she found out her husband was done out of the marquis's title and estates, she never forgave the present marquis or his father, but brought up her only son to hate this family most intensely. The son married Lady Charlotte Carson, and had an only daughter, and that is the Miss D'Auberville who is heiress to the marquis's title and estates."

"How did the name come to be D'Auberville?"

"The nephew at college was the son of Mr. D'Auberville, who married the sister of the then marquis."

"Oh, oh, I see! Well, I think the lady has a very good chance of succeeding to the estate."

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"So I think; and if you saw the marquis in his present state, you would think so, too."

"I suppose he looks in a horrid plight?"

"Frightful, sir—he is almost a skeleton with the fever that he has gone through. He is raw, from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet, as a beefsteak; and he curses from morning till night everything an inch high, or an hour old!—What was it I owed you, Mr. Mills, for the last time we played together?"

"Why," said Mills, "not much. Somewhere about thirty shillings, I think."

"Very well. Now, then, I'll have my revenge! You've had yours, you know, on the marquis. Do you twig, Mr. Mills? —do you twig?"

"Do you ever hear him mention my name in the night, Mr. Delassour?"

"Oh, constantly! If you get one-half of the curses he pours upon you, you will catch it, Mr. Mills, I warn you."

"Oh, curses are like chickens—they come home to roost; and I think the marquis is pretty well covered with his birds."

"He is indeed! I can't endure to go into his room, he looks so horrid, as he lies almost perfectly helpless. Nothing but a thin sheet thrown over him—his beard unshaven—his hair all turned grey—his face as red as a turkey-cock's comb, and his eyes shining like a couple of steel beads."

"I think he would have done better if he would have let me alone, I must confess. Do you ever hear his lordship say anything which shows that he is of that way of thinking?"

"No, never; I have no doubt he thinks so, but he never says anything like that. That is not a part of his nature. He would rather have his heart torn out than say he has done anything he repents of. Such an obstinate beggar I never knew. But come, we won't talk any more of him; let's attend to the game."

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CHAPTER XV.

ALL men have acknowledged that there is something singular and unfathomable in the life that lies within us. Lord Byron has these memorable lines—

> Strange that the vital principle should lie
> Deepest in those who long the most to die.

This is very easy to say, but constantly we find that those whose lips utter this species of exclamation part with their lives at the very moments when they were most desirous to keep them. Poor Byron himself was a memorable instance, while youth was yet in its prime, yielding up existence and reason before he could even explain what were his wishes with regard to his own family affairs. So, though Lord Hardheart felt disgusted with everything that the world contained, though his title no longer charmed, though even the aspect of his estate had grown hateful to him from the idea that another and a detested member of his family was to reap the benefit of his improvements, though he could not even endure to behold the loathsome aspect of his own countenance, though existence had thus become so burdensome to him who had cared so little for the comfort and existence of others, still the exquisite justice of that Almighty Father, who rules with a rod of iron His haughtiest children, and comforts with the tenderest pity His obedient and submissive ones, compelled the haughty and unfeeling marquis to take a renewed lease of his poisoned existence.

By degrees he rose from his sick-bed. Anxious as he had been about his child, no accounts save the most contradictory and delusive reached his hand. Now he was in hopes of finding him at some town in Scotland—now he obtained the clue to something like him in Ireland—now he received information exciting his hopes in London; but, strange to say, the very place where the darling of all his thoughts was undergoing the utmost torture was never placed before him. The truth is, he had employed so many agents and given them such liberal pay, they were sure to find him—hopes—rather than

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declare the futility of their employments. As his medical man forbade the use of razor, his grey and grizzled beard began rapidly to grow; and in this state, followed by one of his keepers at a safe distance, as the summer drew on, he used to spend the day in wandering about his park.

Lost in dejection, he might often be seen sitting for the half hour together on a stile or a fallen tree; then bursting out into imprecations and curses, he would start off, plunging into the thick gloom of some of his woods, as if he would fly alike from all visions and remembrance. Constantly during these times would be seen watching the peer a little old man with a thick crabbed stick, clad in a worn-out tweed coat, walking up and down on the public footpath which crossed the park, every now and then pausing in his walk whenever he could catch a sight of the gaunt and wild-looking figure of the marquis.

On the other hand, the moment the marquis in return beheld this little old man, he burst out into exclamations of the utmost fervour, and would dart away from him just as the huge ox makes the woods ring with his roar and lays his feet to the ground at the sight of the gad-fly.

He did not now seek with cold and placid scorn that humble and withered pedestrian, to put to him the cutting question, "Well, Mills, how's your son?"

Alas! that query would have darted like electric fire into his own heart, and often he recalled the scene that had taken place when he put that question to old Mills—often he recalled the denunciation of the old man, and marvelled by what overruling punishment that feeble and despised adversary had been enabled to make good all his words.

But while Mills evidently imagined that the Swiss valet was devoted to himself merely because that condescending gentleman drank his punch and pegged upon his cribbage-board, the marquis was kept under an equal delusion by the wily foreigner, who seems to have been born with that talent for diplomacy which so many of the continental nations naturally exhibit. It was a suggestion by the valet to the marquis that the former should play the spy upon Mills; but when the marquis inquired how that could be done, "Oh, nothing more easy, my lord.

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The old man is fond of a game at cribbage. I'll just drop in now and then when I go up into the village; and if I only pretend to him to make a great secret of keeping my visits from your lordship's knowledge, he will immediately fall into the idea that I come to him solely for a little gambling."

The marquis pondered on the idea for a day or two, and allowed it to be carried out; but the marquis, in his turn, was quite as deceptive as the valet; for having given his permission for this espionage to be kept up on Mills, he immediately directed two of his agents to keep a watch upon the motions of the valet, and to inform him whether the Swiss actually went to Mills' cottage, and how long he stayed at each visit. What, therefore, with the marquis's two agents, old Mills, and Delassour himself, they formed altogether as nice a nest of adders as could be easily gathered together in a small compass. But old Mills proved a match for the whole of them. In what terrific school he had learned his cunning, his daring, and that great art, silence, it was hard to say; but the marquis never gained the least intelligence by all the watch he set upon his movements.

The surest means of recovering his child—namely, by extensively advertising him—the marquis, with a blind fatuity, had rejected; and this entirely from the malignant pride that could not endure to publish his loss to that portion of the family which would profit by it—namely, the D'Aubervilles—as if it could be possible, in a place like England, entirely to suppress the tittle-tattle and conversation in his own class, who immediately carried such a piece of intelligence to the very party whom he most desired to keep in ignorance of it.

On looking at the picture presented by these two men, nominally Christians, Mills and the marquis, who does not sigh for humanity? Who does not perceive how strangely the powers of darkness and the spirit of evil must work within our human hearts, when men can thus prove the tools of hell in injuring one another? Here were these two men, neighbours in the same parish, who, by a little of that mutual kindness and forgiveness which is the very essence of their religion, might at least have lived peaceably in the same locality, if not with

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mutual advantage; yet, by their own baleful passions, each had encompassed the other with a perfect pandemonium, having both combined to rend and tear in shreds each other's happiness!

Stern and relentless as Mills was, demoniacal as proved the spirit that led him to seek the marquis's path and gloat upon his agony, still even he at times seemed touched by the infinite misery that he beheld. There were minutes when, perhaps, if the marquis could have descended to a few words admissive of his sorrow for the past, Mills would have accepted them, and acted accordingly; but he dared not quit the public highway to accost the marquis, for he would have been a trespasser, and, as we have already said, the faintest sight of him whom the marquis termed "the old slave-dealer" from a distance was enough to drive the haughty nobleman into some sequestered glade, where the other could not even behold him.

Again and again, as the marquis espied his tormentor, he longed to utter some words similar to those dropped by the monarch who, speaking of A'Beckett, said, "Will no one rid me of this fellow?" but it was a momentary wish, and however natural, if uttered, would never have been heard by those who had any care to act upon it.

In this state of mutual torment their lives wore on. In Christian society there are many forms of atheism, infidelity, and scepticism. The vicious are very fond of consoling themselves with the notion that there is no post-vital torment; but if the place of future punishment were only to be some world like the present, where relentless spirits should be released from all fear of a future judgment or a further fall, and then left at liberty to torture one another by their mutual crimes, how can anyone, beholding what man does to man in this world, for one moment doubt how intense a hell would be made of any future place of existence where, abandoned to all the worst excesses of the human heart, there was no grave to interpose its barrier of protection and repose?

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE course of our story now takes us back to Manchester. At last, poor little Totty once more—thanks to nature!—had gradually struggled through the dreadful disease that had attacked him. In the case of his father, the effect of vaccination had almost become worn out, when he received the infection from a lock of his child's hair; but, in the case of the young Earl of Hopemore, vaccination had taken place only two years previously to the infection. The difference in the two cases was most observable. The marquis, on recovering from his attack, had his face perfectly ploughed up by the disease; the little earl, contrary to all expectations, had his countenance left very red, but had scarcely a single mark upon it. For fear of infecting the other child, he was so far spared that he had his cellar entirely to himself, and, until the disease had perfectly left him, was not required to address himself to the hateful work of his unhappy calling.

At last, however, the cow-doctor reported him perfectly cured, and able to carry a soot-brush, though still too weak to carry even a bag with anything in it. In this state he was summoned by Mother Redcap to go out into the streets, and follow his calling with that respectable member of society, Mr. Tom.

"Now, you young beggar!" said Tom before they started, "you mind one thing I got to tell you. You are to hear, see, and say nothing; and remember your name is Harry."

"My name is 'Statius," replied poor Totty.

"You young beggar!" said the sweep, shaking his hand in the face of the poor little invalid, "I will knock your little teeth down your throat if you call yourself 'Statius again! Your name is Harry, and nothing else; and if anybody axes you what your name is, you say it is Harry Smith, remember; and if I catch you saying anything else, I will have your life! There, don't begin to cry, or I'll give you a whopping for that! Make haste and take your crust of bread and come along with us.

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Poor Totty saw in the villanous face of the sweep sufficient indication of his meaning to stop his lamentations and do as he was bid; and with his little heart almost broken by the dirt and filth with which he was surrounded, his poor crimson body showing through innumerable rents in an old sooty shirt, a disgusting pair of sooty trowsers tied round his hips, his hair all matted together with neglect, the disease and soot combined, he followed at the heel of Tom the sweep, accompanied by Sam, the boy he had purchased, and sallied out at three o'clock in the morning to assist in the business of sweeping chimneys.

When Totty got to the door, he found a donkey and cart duly harnessed; and being lifted into it by the sweep, little Sam was compelled to walk on one side while Tom walked on the other, and in this way, in the early dawn, they drove out of the town of Manchester to sweep some flues.

About four o'clock the party arrived at a large mansion in the suburbs of the City of Cotton; and, having driven into the grounds and gone into the back court, went round to the kitchen-door—

"Now, Sam, you hold the donkey," said Tom, "while I go and knock up the sarvents."

Taking the brush, the sweep began to knock at the back door, and waited a quarter of an hour for the servants to come down. None appeared.

"These lazy beggars!" said Tom, "they constantly makes us wait in this way. It ain't more than four o'clock. Have you heard four o'clock strike, Sam?"

"Yes, sir; I heard it strike just before we turned into the avenue."

"They ordered us out here at four o'clock to sweep six chimbneys, but they don't seem inclined to come down." Another quarter of an hour had passed. By this time poor Totty's teeth began to chatter; and the cold wind passing through his tattered shirt, recently risen as he was from sickness, one cannot say a sick-bed—for his bed had been the hard soot—under the influence of the cold the poor child began to cry.

"Cease your blubber, you young thief! or I'll give you the

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end of the brush! Get out of the cart, if you're cold, and run up and down!"*

The poor child tried to get out of the cart, which, with Tom's assistance, he did; and while the bigger boy held his hand, he ran up and down to warm himself.

In this way they were kept waiting at the door for more than two hours, till, at about a quarter past six, the bolts were withdrawn from the back door; and when it was opened, a great, fat, stout fellow appeared, who called himself the butler.

"Holloa, sweeps! is this you knocking one up at this early hour of the morning?" and the huge, fat menial yawned as if he intended at least half his head to drop off.

"Please, sir, I was ordered to come at four o'clock by the housekeeper," said Tom, touching his hat; "we've got six chimbneys to sweep."

"Housekeeper be plagued! If she orders you at that hour, why doesn't she come down and let you in? I'm not going to get up at four o'clock for all the chimbneys in the world! Does that person belong to you there in the shrubbery as I see dodging about?"

"Where, sir? I don't see anyone."

"Yes, there he is, with a long brown coat."

"Oh, that chap! I know who he is; he is one of the informers under the new Act, do you see, sir? Them's on the look-out to inform against us, for sweeping without machinery. Be so good as to lock the door, and not let him come in, and he will never be able to prove anything."

"I'll precious soon settle him! I'll just go out in the back yard and let the dog loose."

"Aye; do please, sir. We didn't bring any machinery with us, because we know it isn't approved of."

"Machinery be hanged! What new-fangled nonsense! You got a good boy who can sweep, han't you?"

"Oh, yes, sir; here's my boy Sam—he is a rare, good sweeper."

"Well, then, you go in and turn to, and I'll let the dog loose

* See House of Lords' evidence Question 5098, in Appendix.

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at this chap skulking about the premises. I won't have no informers here."

"Thank you, sir," said Tom.

"Here, Sam, you go in here. Harry, come along; mind you keep your eyes about you; your turn will come soon, you know, as you grow a little older. You can't think what rare fun it is, going up chimbneys—ain't it, Sam?"

"I don't know, sir," said Sam.

"Don't know, you young blackguard! Yes, you do know. Why, it is the delight of your life—you know it is. Here, get along at it;" and Tom gave the unhappy Sam a kick with his great nailed shoe, that was very persuasive the next time the same question was asked, in procuring an answer in the affirmative.

The first chimney to which the sweep was shown was the kitchen-chimney, and, as the servants had not taken the trouble to rake the fire properly out over night, there were still a few live ashes in the grate, which Master Tom had to rake out.

The cook was there.

"Here, give me the poker. I'll soon get them out," said the damsel. "I suppose that is no hindrance to your boy going up."

"Oh, dear, no, marm, that is no hindrance. Sam likes a good warm chimbney, after being out in the cold. Here, Sam, put your cap on."

As this was the first time that poor Totty had ever seen his new calling completely exercised, he stood looking on in all the wonderment of helpless childhood, opening his eyes to their fullest extent; while Sam, taking his shirt off and putting a large, loose, filthy, sooty cap over his head and face, entered the chimney with his brush, exhibiting as he did so his neck covered with scars and bruises, his elbows all raw and bleeding, and all down the course of his back, where the projections of the spine stood plainly out from long starvation, a mass of bleeding scars presented themselves, from constant collision with the rough and jagged sides of the chimneys. The soot, of course, impregnated all his festering and bleeding wounds.

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As soon as the little boy had entered the kitchen-chimney, Tom, the master, who brought no machine with him, pinned up a large soot-cloth, and, this being done, sat down upon the fender and crossed his arms in idleness; the poor, weak, sickly child inside doing all the work, for which this idle vagabond was to reap the emolument.

"That 'ere child o' yours looks rather poorly, Mr. Sweep, doesn't he?" said the cook.

"Oh, no, marm," said Tom; "he is a remarkable wigorous young man, is that. He never has nothing the matter with him, only he looks a little thin or so; they do at that time of life. You just give him a bit of cold pudding presently, when he has done the chimbneys, and see how he'll put it down into his jacket."

"Very likely enough; and as I have a little in the larder, would you like some, my little shaving?"

"If you please," replied Totty.

"Well, that is a nice-spoken little boy as ever I heard. Where did you get your education, my dear?" said the cook, at once struck by the tone of voice, so different from that generally found in such a rank of life.

Tom, the sweep, got up from his sitting position, and at once advanced towards the child in evident alarm.

"Willie taught me," said Totty.

"And who is Willie?" said the cook.

"Please, marm, that is the name he gives my brother," said Tom. "Here, go and hold that corner of the soot-cloth, to prevent the soot coming out;" and Tom took hold of Totty's shoulder, and immediately drew him away from any further questioning.

"Well, now," said the cook, "I should scarcely have thought, Mr. Sweep, you could have a wanted him so very young. That poor little creature, how red he looks!"

"Oh, yes, marm, he has just recovered from the small-pox."

"Oh, dear! take him away! oh, take him out of the house directly! I can't have him in here on any account!"

"Lor', marm, there's no affection about him."

"I don't care; there is nothing I can abide less than the

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small-pox. Take him out of the house directly, and let him stand outside of the door. Here, stop a moment, I'll give him a little bit of cold pudding;" and the cook, having gone to the larder and cut a slice of this coveted dainty, put it into poor Totty's hands, who was forthwith banished out of the warm kitchen, and taken by Master Tom outside the back yard-door, Tom, all the while, growling curses upon the cook and himself at this *dénouement;* for he was not without considerable apprehension either that the child might make some complaint, or be asked some questions, or possibly even run away.

When they got into the back yard, Tom looked round and perceived an outer gate, and that the outhouse-court inclosed it: walking up to this gate, he turned the key and took it away. His mind being quite easy that poor Totty couldn't escape him, he returned to his work, and, one after another, the six chimneys were swept; and the soot being deposited in the cart, they drove home.

As they were going along the road, they overtook a brother professional.

"Holloa, Tom, is that you?"

"Yes, Gordon, my boy, here I be," replied Tom.

"I say, Tom," said Gordon, "my donkey is dead."

"Lor'! is he? Well, I'm blowed! I should like to see him when we gets home."

"Why, Tom?"

"'Cos, why, I never seed a dead donkey."

"Well, then, Tom, you shall see one to-day. Can you carry some soot for me?"

"Well, to-day I'm afraid I cannot, for I have got my own work to do."

"Oh, I don't want it to-day: I want it on Sunday—that is to-morrow, ain't it?"

"Well, I think it is. Sam, do you know it to-morrow is Sunday?"

"I'm sure I don't know, master."

"Oh, I know it is, Tom; I know it must be to-morrow, 'cos I have got a boiler-flue to sweep, and you know they never has it done except on Sundays, and then the fire is out, and there

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will be more soot than my boy can carry; and as my donkey is dead, I thought you wouldn't be doing much to-morrow, and you could do it for me."

"Well, yes, Mr. Gordon, if you pays me for it, I can do it."

"Why, in course, you don't think that I should ax a purfessional gentleman to do a turn of that sort for nothing?"

"Well, I'll carry it for you. Where is it?"

"Well, I will call for you to-morrow morning at six o'clock. Are you going on here to sweep some chimbneys?"

"Yes, I'se got a few more to do before I goes home."

"Well, then, you look in to-night, if you like, to see the dead donkey, for he is dead enough for anythink." And Mr. Gordon proceeded on his way, followed by his boy; while the brother professional, Mr. Tom, proceeded to sweep five more chimneys, all of which were done by the unfortunate little slave Sam, until at last he was so exhausted, when the eleventh was completed, as to be unable to put one foot before the other; and Tom, taking him on his back,* carried him to the cart, laid him down on the top of the soot, and, with Totty following with the brush in his hand, they proceeded to drive home.

When they arrived at home, the soot was carried out of the cart in a sack into the back cellar.

"Ah, you skulking young blackguard!" said Tom to the exhausted child; "none of your airs! You and Harry here turn to and sift the whole of this soot, while I go and get some victuals; and mind you are careful, and sift every bit of the breeze out, and put it on a heap there, one side; and if, when I come down, I don't find it properly done, I will knock the life out of the pair of you! Mind, no snivelling; stick-to at it."

Away went Mr. Tom up stairs, leaving the two children in the cellar.

Scarcely had he vanished, when down came old Mother Redcap.

"I say, my dears, where's them coppers you got given to you to-day?" and, coming up to Sam, she put her hand into his pocket and pulled out the few miserable pence, intermingled with broken victuals, which had been given to him by the humanity of the people at whose houses he had swept.

* See Appendix, Q. 219.

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Sam never attempted any resistance—he knew it was in vain; and his pockets cleared, poor Totty went through the same act of plundering. In this way the old hag made up nearly a shilling; and collecting together their various scraps, she took them away in her apron, saying, "Now, my dears, as soon as ever you have done your works, you shall have these nice victuals for your dinner."

"Here, Mother Redcap, you old hag!" sung out Tom from above.

"Coming, Tom, coming; don't be so taydious aeger."

"Eager, you old thief! go out and get some gin."

"Gin—yes, it is always gin!" muttered the old woman, stumbling along up stairs, and leaving behind her the two boys to do the work assigned to them; while the hulking sweep above indulged in the debauch of a plentiful carouse.

And what was the work given to these two children? The soot they had collected in the morning stood before them in a large heap, containing several sacksful. As it had been taken out of the various chimneys, it had become mixed with a proportion of the coals and cinders left in the various grates. In the language of the trade, these are called "breeze;" and this breeze it is usual to sift out from the soot, and sell by itself to those who require it for burning in hothouse-flues, and other similar purposes; while the soot, when separated from the breeze, is sold to the farmer for manure.

The disgusting operation of sifting these filthy products was left to these poor children, one not four years old, and the other ten years old, and was to be accomplished by them before they were allowed to eat as dinner the broken food that the charity of strangers had bestowed on them; while the master up stairs, who got eightpence a chimney for the eleven chimneys the boy had swept—in all, seven shillings and sixpence, being two shillings and six-pence more than the purchase of the little slave had cost him—regaled himself in idleness on meat, gin, and tobacco!

And this is the system which the aristocracy of England, the rich peers, the rich magistrates, the rich mill-owners, the rich Mr. George Carr Glyn, M.P., Mr. Cobden, M.P., Mr. Bright, M.P., Mr. Roebuck, M.P., Sir Benjamin Hall, M.P.,

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Sir John Shelley, M.P., Mr. Alexander Hastie, M.P., Mr. Edward Miall, M.P., Mr. Phinn, M.P., and other strenuous supporters of liberty, are upholding by their votes in the year of grace 1854! Think of this, English constituencies! How proud you ought to be of such members!

CHAPTER XVII.

"WELL, Tom, my boy, I see you are all ready with your donkey," said Mr. Gordon, walking into Tom's house the following morning at six o'clock.

"Oh, yes, I'm all ready."

"Come along, then; you've got your boys, have you, in case they should be wanted?"

"Oh, yes. I suppose you'll only want them to shovel in the soot?"

"That is all; I have got my own boy, Price. Let us be off."

"I'm all ready. Walk ahead," said Mr. Tom.

Accordingly, the whole party got into the cart and set off at a round trot; and Tom, who was provided with a stick with a sharp nail at the end of it, soon persuaded his donkey to set off at a rapid pace, which did not terminate until they got to the cotton-mill of the celebrated Sir John Playfair.

Sir John was a noted man in Manchester. He had even been the Mayor of Manchester. Nothing delighted him so much as to insist upon the education of the people; nothing delighted him so much as to give good dinners and to play the hospitable man. Such a generous, philanthropic, enlightened, warm-hearted man was Sir John Playfair! He would never rest until he had procured for the people, the humblest of the people, the blessings of a public library, for the workman to read free of all cost and charges; it was so admirable that the people should be educated themselves, and educate their children. Excellent Sir John Playfair! enlightened Sir John Playfair! Who could do anything but rejoice that the honour of knighthood had fallen upon the shoulders of a man so hospitable of heart,

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and so very fond of freedom and improvement, as to urge beyond all things the improvement of the people? Wonderful Sir John Playfair! Alas! was it not still more wonderful than anything that stood out in Sir John Playfair's life that, with all his admiration for education, he should still warmly uphold the climbing system, by which, at least, four thousand of the children of the poor are liable, not only to all its cruelties, its slaveries and its murders, but to be kept in such a state of dirt, and filth, and bondage, that all education of these four thousand children should be utterly impossible; and that the statistics, proclaimed in Parliament, of education amongst this mass, should, in 1854, give to the British public the astounding results of only one being able to read out of every hundred. Such, however, was the inconsistency of Sir John Playfair; so that, while he was Mayor of Manchester, he put it in black and white under his own handwriting,* in the year 1850, that in "*very many of the very best houses in England the flues, though not in the least dangerous, are so constructed as to make the use of the sweeping-machine quite impossible, and that he could not think it reasonable that in such cases proprietors should be compelled by Act of Parliament to alter them.*" Yet so it was. Did he know that children were about to be employed in cleaning the flues of his own mill on this day? It matters little. Very possibly he did not know it; but, at any rate, having expressed these public sentiments in writing, it was not very likely, even if he had known of their contemplated employment, that he would have put himself out of the way to order that the children should not be employed. At any rate, whether with his knowledge or not in this case, the works having been stopped on the previous Saturday, the fires were allowed to go down in the flues, and on this Sunday morning Gordon and his man Kelly and his boy Price set to work to clean them.

While this was being done, Tom, and his donkey, and two boys waited in the yard of the mill, and Gordon sent Price into the flue under the boiler with a scraper to scrape out the soot, and after him his man Kelly to take the flue on the other side, while Gordon remained out in the yard to undertake that

* See Lords' evidence, Answer 234, in Appendix.

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very laborious part of the occupation—smoking his pipe, in which he was assisted by Master Tom. "Hark!" said the latter after five minutes, "your boy is calling out."

"What does he say, Kelly?" asked Gordon, stooping down to the mouth of the flue and calling him. "Kelly, why don't you answer me? What does he say, Kelly?"

"He says it is too hot, master," replied Kelly, appearing in a few minutes at the mouth of the flue, followed by little Price.

"What! are you coming out?"

"Yes, I be; 'tis precious hot. The boiler must be nearly full of water. They ought to have let the water out of the boiler, and let the flue get cool. Do let us get out to get a breath or two of air!" and out jumped Kelly, and in another minute after him out came Price.

"What is the matter, you young vagabond?" asked Gordon of the latter, swearing at him.

"Well, master, it is too hot for me to bear—that flue is."

"You young blackguard, you are only capping! Get in again directly with your scraper, and let us have none of your nonsense!"

"Well, master, it is so hot I can't get in; it is awful burning!" and the child began to cry. He was a poor little, diminutive urchin, only seven years of age, and in reality scarcely looked much older than Totty, who was free from that natural stinting effect which the starvation and cruelty of the climbing system produces.

"Drop your crying, you young thief! or I'll soon give you a poser! Here, Tom, lend us a stick. Arn't you got one?"

"Aye; that is the way to stop him. You will find one in the cart; there is a stick I whop the donkey with there."

Going over to the cart, and seizing the stick in question, Gordon returned, and struck the poor infant several times across the back. To avoid the repetition of these blows, the poor child turned about and got once more into the furnace. After a few minutes' time, while Mr. Gordon continued smoking his pipe, he leant his head down, and then said, "I don't hear that young boy at work. What a troublesome lot of little brutes these boys be!"

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"Here, you Price, you get on with your scraping there, or I'll come in with the stick to you!"

Still no noise was heard. Five minutes more were allowed to elapse.

"Hearken there, you young beggar! why don't you get to work, and let's hear you scraping?"

The "young beggar," however, was not heard, nevertheless.

"What the blazes does this young shaver mean?"

"Why, master, the fact is, the flues is on fire in there; it was so hot where I was I couldn't bear my hand on it."

"You had better go in and see what he is doing. You go in, Kelly, and bring him out."

"No, thank you, I've had enough of it; 'tis your turn now. You go yourself, and see how you like it!"

"Why, you're an insolent beggar, not to do as I order you! You call me master, I suppose? Ain't you my foreman?"

"Yes, master, I am your foreman to sweep chimbneys, but I am not your foreman to make roast man's meat; and I shan't go into burning flues to roast my carcase, for you or any other master! You may go in yourself, if you like. I have been in once for you; and it is not in a fit state for anyone to go into; there is a boiler full of boiling-water, and the flue is a-fire still."

"Here, get out of the way, you cowardly beggar, and let us go in and see what the boy is about!" and Mr. Gordon jumped down into the ash-pit, got into the mouth of the furnace, and proceeded to search for the poor little child Price, whom he had so inhumanly forced in.

After going a little way into the flue, he found the child with his face downward, breathing hard; and in a few minutes he appeared at the mouth of the flue with the child in this state. "Here, Tom—here, Kelly, help us out with the boy; he is shamming or something."

Tom and Kelly immediately put forward their hands, and between them they got out poor little Price, breathing quick and hard, his face flushed, and himself insensible and unable to speak.

"Lay him down on the ground," cried Tom. "There, Sam, go to the pump and bring some water in your hat."

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Sam did as he was bid; and the other man dashed one hatful of water after another right over him, but still he did not seem to recover. His hard, quick gasping continued with that stertorous noise which denotes some internal injury of the brain; and the child was perfectly insensible.

"Here's a precious go! What's to be done now?" said Gordon.

"Well, I thinks we had better drive the boy home to your missus, and let her look after him, while you get the soot out as soon as it is cool enough, and we will come back for it with the cart."

"Very well, so be it, then; take that little beggar out of my way—I know he is only shamming. It is as much as ever I can do to keep my fingers off him," said the amiable Mr. Gordon, while the boy was lifted into the cart by the side of poor little Totty, who, seeing the melancholy condition in which he was, began quietly to cry beside him, the tears chasing one another down Totty's cheek; the poor frightened little earl not daring to allow any noise of his grief to escape his lips, for fear of being thrashed himself.

With a vast deal of alacrity Master Sam jumped into the donkey-cart with Tom, fearful of being left behind and sent into the burning flue.

"Here, Gordon," cried Tom, as they were starting out with the cart, "what did you do with my stick when you had done whacking your boy? I shall never be able to get the donkey along without it."

"Here it is, Tom. I wish it had broken his neck—the obstinate young brat!" said Gordon, handing him the stick; and Tom applying the nail part to the donkey, they drove quickly for Gordon's house; and having arrived at it, Gordon's wife came out, and between them they carried little Price down into Gordon's cellar, and there laid him upon some straw.

"Why, how have you done this?" said Mrs. Gordon, as she knelt down by the child's side and rubbed his hands.

"Oh, I don't know," said Tom; "Gordon says he is only shamming."

"Shamming! he is shamming none," said Mrs. Gordon—"the poor boy is regular downright ill. What have you done to him?"

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"Done to him?—done nothink to him. Only he went into the flue at Playfair's mill, and Gordon fetched him out."

"Well, what's these marks about his shoulders?"

"Oh, that is only a whack or two with the stick."

"Ah! you am a nice lot, you are. You tell Gordon he had best come home and see about this boy, and get the doctor for him."

"Doctor be rotted! Missus, he won't want no doctor; he'll come right again;" and the feeling Mr. Tom left Mrs. Gordon and her apprentice in the cellar, and went back with the cart to Playfair's mill till the soot was got out.

This done, the donkey-cart was loaded with it, and was taken back to Gordon's home.

In the course of the day, as soon as Gordon had enjoyed a good dinner, and the usual amount of gin, he went down into the cellar where his wife had made some effort to clean poor little Price, who did not, however, appear to recover.

"What is all this about, you young vagabond?" said Gordon, when he came down, putting his foot to the child; but the hapless sufferer seemed to take no notice of the voice or anything else.

Going back once more to the cellar-door, he called up to his wife, "Missus, give me down that stick which lies in the chimney."

"What for, Gordon?"

"What for? Why, this here chap wants the rod—he is only shamming."

The woman's foot was heard on the stairs leading down to the cellar. "Here, Gordon, don't you go for to touch that child; he is not shamming."

"I tell you he is, you stupid old faggot! He is regularly foxing and nothing more. I will take it out of him."

Infuriated with drink and passion, Gordon flew away from his wife, went up stairs, and in a few minutes came back with a hazel-stick about the size of his little finger.

The poor little child of seven years old, already nearly burnt alive by this fellow's brutality, he now struck violently several times on the back and shoulders till he screamed out most pitifully.

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"Oh, don't ee! don't ee go to do that!" cried his wife. "He is not shamming—I know he is not shamming; the child is regular ill—he is downright dying."

"He is not, you old fool! he is only foxing," cried the husband, pushing away his wife, and striking the child again. Another violent scream came forth from the tiny murdered victim at each blow, and the brutal sweep at length reeled up stairs, and, having proceeded to light his pipe, departed out of the house for his amusements.

And can it be possible, the American reader will exclaim, that such a scene as this could occur in England?—England, the home of so much wealth, refinement, and intelligence—England, the home of all those high-souled and titled ladies who wept such endless tears over "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Can it be possible that such a scene as this took place in England, where so much sympathy exists for the poor and the oppressed?

Yes, Americans, in England, and during that night this murdered child expired; but even in England sometimes the law is heard with its small, still voice.

The coroner having obtained intelligence of the death of this Price, an inquest was held upon the body, and the cause of death declared to have arisen from suffocation produced by compression of the lungs. The body was seen to be burnt in several places, and on the back of this infant of seven years of age were the stripes and bruises produced by the personal violence of the amiable Mr. Gordon, by which he drove this child to be broiled on the burning flue of a Manchester steam-engine.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Tom, there is a foreman of Mr. Holdsworth's mill wants you," said old Mother Redcap, a few nights after poor little Price was thus brutally destroyed.

"Wants me! What does he want me for, I wonder?" said Tom, going to the door. "Do you want me, sir?"

* See the whole of the details of this case in the evidence taken before the Committee in the House of Lords, Question 213, in Appendix.

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"Yes, my man; I want you to come and sweep our boiler-flue next Monday."

"Well, I will come, sir; I suppose you know that price is risen."

"Price is risen—what the deuce is that for?"

"Well, we 'bliged to raise the price of boiler-flues one and sixpence a flue, sir."

"Why so?"

"Because they uses up so many boys, sir. A boy, you see, was burnt to death in sweeping Playfair's mill, and it isn't pleasant for us masters, sir, when we meets with a misfortune of this sort."

"Why, what's that to you? Boys are plenty enough."

"Well, sir, I don't know about that. It is not about the boys so much; but they say poor Gordon is to be tried for manslaughter about his boy."

"What has happened to Gordon's boy?"

"Well, I tell ye, sir: he was burnt in cleaning a flue, sir, in Playfair's mill last Sunday."

"Sarve him right; he should take more care."

"Well, we do take as much care as we can, sir, but you do not give us a chance. You work the mill on as late as you can on Saturday night, and then you don't empty the boiling-water out of the boiler to save fuel; and when we goes in in the morning, we are sure to find some part of the flue or another with the sparks red-hot in it; and if you send the boys into that sort of furnace, how can we help roasting them alive now and then?"

"Well, I don't know; that is no business of mine. You must roast 'em if you will, I suppose. At any rate, will you come and sweep the mill or not, or shall I go to somebody else?"

"Oh, I'll come and do it, sir; but I hope you will give me the one and sixpence extra?"

"Well, you do it well, and I won't grumble about that. Then you come to the mill on Monday afternoon."

"Very well, sir, I'll be there."

Away went Mr. Jones, and back came Master Tom.

"I say, Mother Redcap, you go round to Simmons's and ax

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him if he can lend me his boy, Stephen Ratcliffe, to do a job next Monday afternoon. Tell him, in course I will pay him for the boy."

"Shall I tell him what it is to do?"

"No, don't tell him what it is to do; just say it is to do a job. If he says, 'Is it anything particular?' say, 'Nothing particular. Sweep a kitchen-chimney,' say; and if he can let me have the boy, let him come here on Monday afternoon by four o'clock."

In a few minutes, old Mother Redcap returned to say that Stephen Ratcliffe should be at Tom's house on the following Monday.

Faithful to the appointment when the morning came, the boy, who was eleven years of age, appeared.

Once more the donkey and cart were had in requisition, and Totty and Sam, with their Master Tom, and Stephen Ratcliffe, the borrowed boy, drove off to the mill, which was at some little distance from their residence.

As near as possible the clock had struck five a few minutes before they had got inside the mill-yard; and the foreman having pointed out the boiler-flue that required cleansing, Tom sent Ratcliffe through the furnace-mouth into the flue, while, as usual, Tom took care of himself by remaining at the mouth of the flue and shovelling the soot into the bag as the two boys brought it out to him.

"Take care of yourselves, you young dogs!" said Tom; "you mind that a boy was killed in a boiler last week, and you take care and come out and rest if you feel it too much for ye."

"Very well, sir," said the boys; and after being in a few minutes, they accordingly came out and rested.

"Purty hot work, boys, isn't it?" said Tom.

"Yes, master," said the boys, "it is;" and after a little rest they went in again.

Presently, after doing this two or three times, Sam came out to Tom and said, "I think there is something the matter with this other boy. He has got to the end of the flame-bed; the flue is very hot, and I heard him cry."

"Why didn't he come out?"

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"Well, I asked him if he would come out, and he said no. I said, may I go and tell the master, and he said no. So, as he stopped his scraping, I thought I had better come and tell you."

"How far off is he?"

"Well, I think he is about a yard and a half further down the flame-bed."

"Let's call to him. Here, Stephen Ratcliffe, come out."

Stephen, however, didn't answer; and Tom's heart beginning to sink with the recollection of the previous death, and the report already circulated in the trade that Gordon would get transported, thought it high time to be active.

Tom had brought a man with him called Nicholson, who was engaged in another flue, and he called out to him, "Nicholson, run and tell the engineer to send a doctor. I believe my boy is dead."

While Nicholson immediately took to his heels to go to the engineer, Tom at once crept into the flue himself with Sam, and in a few moments he pulled to the mouth the unfortunate boy, Stephen Ratcliffe.

As soon as the light fell upon him, "Well, this boy is worse than the other," cried Tom, and, lifting him out of the flue, he laid him down on the ground.

"I am afraid he is dead, master," said Sam.

"It looks like it," said Tom, scratching his head. "Run and get some water." Accordingly, cold water was poured over him until the doctor came.

"You have sent for me too late, my man. This boy is dead. Just turn him over, poor little fellow! Look here. Do you see how burned he is? Here is a burn, you see, on the left shoulder—here's another on the left arm—a third on the left hip—there, again, you see his knuckles are burnt, and his face and his ears are all burnt." As the surgeon said this, he laid his finger on the unfortunate child's still warm corpse, and wherever he touched the burns the skin all peeled off.

By this time the engineer stood beside the corpse.

"Go and get a thermometer, engineer, and take it into the flue, and see what the heat is."

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The engineer went into the flue with the thermometer, and came back again.

"What is the heat there, in the soot?"

"Eighty-seven," said the engineer, "as marked upon the thermometer; but when I put my hand into the soot at the bottom, I found it so hot that I could not bear it there more than five or ten minutes."

"How far down the flue was the boy found, master?"

"Well, sir, about three yards beyond the flame-bed," said Tom.

"Well, but," said the surgeon, "when did you let this fire out?"

"Why, we cleared out the fire on Saturday," said the engineer, "and I opened the damper about one-third; but as we've got another boiler to work, it would have spoiled the draught if I had opened the damper any more."

"Do you think one-third was enough to clear out the foul air, and to cool it?"

"Well, sir, I think it was, with two days intervening."

"Have you closed the damper?"

"Yes, I closed the damper at twelve o'clock to-day, to give more draught to the boiler."

"Did anybody see you close it?"

"No, nobody saw me close it."

"Did you tell the sweeps that you had closed it?"

"No, I never told the sweeps. They should have told me if they wanted it open."

"Well, at any rate, it comes to this—the boy is suffocated, and there he lies dead. This seems a queer country of ours, Mr. Engineer, where things like this can be done in defiance of the law with impunity;* but I suppose it will work its own cure in time;" and the surgeon, shaking his head, buttoned his coat up, and disappeared.

"Curse the engine-boilers, I say!" said Tom. "I wish the cotton-lords would sweep 'em themselves. Now, I may be pulled up before a jury about this precious go. It is very hard upon me, sir, I must say."

* For the details of this case (Stephen Ratcliffe), see Lords' evidence, Answer 214, in Appendix.

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Mr. Tom was much impressed, evidently, with the hardship of his own case. He quite forgot how far the hardship bore upon the poor little boy of eleven years of age, who was just roasted to death to do the work that a very commonplace cane-machine and a soot-door or two would enable a grown-up man to execute with perfect safety.

However, lifting the corpse into the cart, Tom proceeded to drive him home; poor little Totty sitting next to the roasted child, and looking with horror on this second victim to that dreadful trade for which he had been kidnapped.

On his way home Tom delivered the dead child to his master; and then telling Sam to put up the donkey, and driving Totty before him, he entered his own house, and met Dame Redcap on the stairs.

"Why, what's the matter, Tom?" said that gentle specimen of the fair sex.

"I'm blowed if I arn't roasted another boy to-day! We must get out of this, mother."

"How do you mean, Tom?"

"If we don't get out of this, I shall have the crowner looking me up, and I suppose I shall come to be transported as well as Gordon."

"No, you don't say so."

"If I don't, I'm diddled!"

"Well, what's best?"

"Why, cut and run."

"You don't mean that."

"I'm blest if I don't, though, and that to-night; and so I tell you of it in time; and when the row has blown over a little, we will come back again."

"Where will you go?"

"Oh, anywhere out of this precious shindy! There is two boys in one week—think of that, and two more dead of the small-pox that there is nothink said about. I shall be ruined in boys if I don't look sharp. Go and get us some gin."

With the last never-failing resource, Mr. Tom proceeded once more to console himself, and reflect over the course that it behoved him to take.

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Going out that evening to another man in the "trade," he brought him back to look at and value the amount of soot collected in the cellars, which Tom proceeded at once to sell, being, in point of fact, the whole of his capital in business. Of course, Tom took one opinion of its value, and his friend another; and before this could be satisfactorily settled, it became necessary to make a further demand on the services of Mother Redcap, and another large black bottle of gin made its appearance.

About eight o'clock in the evening, the soot appraiser handed over the amount agreed between them; and at nine, Tom, accompanied by his staff of Sam and Totty, might have been seen driving out of Manchester at a sharp trot in the donkey-trap he had bought with the price of his soot, to take a little country circuit till the roasting to death of the second boy had blown over.

For several hours that night the party continued to travel on, until, arriving near a small village, a convenient haystack was found near the road; and Tom opening the gate, drove into the field containing it, took down the hurdles that inclosed it, pulled out a few armfuls of hay from the middle of the stack, and, giving his ass some to feed on, made the rest into a bed, and left the two boys to rough it any way they could.

At five in the morning Tom awoke from his nap, once more harnessed his trap, and drove into the village, seeking work.

Here they got half-a-dozen chimneys to clean, and on the proceeds of this Tom hastened to buy his own breakfast, leaving his boys to eat the broken victuals they had given them. In this manner they continued wandering on from village to village, and from town to town, until at last they approached the county town of Nottingham.

It was Monday morning, about five o'clock, that Tom drove his donkey into this town; and as he was passing through Byard's-lane, a man of the name of Baker hearing the cry of "Sweep, sweep," came out from a small, low house, and asked him to sweep his chimney.

There was still some fire in the grate when all three went into the kitchen.

"Here, Sam, you pull that fire out," said Tom.

And accordingly Sam raked out nearly the whole of it, and

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then, taking a scraper, he went up the chimney, scraping along as he went up, and the soot falling down into the fireplace, where Tom had put up the usual soot-cloth.

Presently the scraping was heard to cease.

Tom waited for some minutes, and then, undoing a corner of the soot-cloth, cried out, "Sam, what is the matter? Why are you stopping?"

Sam, however, made no reply.

Tom waited a few minutes and again undid the cloth. "Sam, how are you getting on?"

Sam, however, said nothing, and his getting on evidently was impeded, for the sound of his scraper was heard no more.

Once more the soot-cloth was unfastened, and again Tom paused, hoping that Sam was resting himself. After ten minutes, hearing no sound, he again undid the cloth and roared out, "Why, Sam, you ain't stuck fast, be you?"

Still the boy made no reply, still he didn't come down, and the master of the house, in his turn, began to call—but no reply was made to either.

"I think I'd better go up and see after him," said Tom, undoing the soot-cloth; and taking off his coat and shirt, to make himself as small as he could, he went up the chimney, and in a few minutes came down again.

"Did you see him?" said Baker, the master of the house.

"Yes," said Tom, "I have seen him; he has got up in a strait place there, and there he is swinging about."

"Can't you help him down?" said Baker.

"No," said Tom, "I can't. I have been pulling at his legs all this time, but he seems to me to stick faster and faster."

"What does he say himself?"

"Well," said Tom, "he doesn't say anything—that is the worst of it. I can't tell whether he is sulking, or what is the matter."

"Stop," said Mr. Baker, "I'll call to him again. I say, there, my boy, make haste down, and we'll give you some beer. What is the matter?"

The word "beer," however, seemed to produce no effect upon the silent Sam, who made no sign.

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"Well, Mr. Sweep," said Baker, "something is the matter with the boy. I will go for Mr. Hammersley, the joiner;" and, stepping out over the way, in a few minutes Mr. Hammersley came back, and, looking up the chimney, called to the boy, but, like the other shouters, received no answer.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Hammersley, "it is my opinion there's something not quite right here;" and having uttered this profound remark, he scratched his head and stood considering.

"Can't we cut him out of the chimney, Mr. Hammersley?" said Baker.

"Well, sir," said Hammersley, pulling his rule out of his pocket, and looking up at the direction which the chimney took, and then measuring the wall, "the chimney slopes away here, I see, one foot in three, and he is eight or ten feet up the chimney. I should not be surprised if the chimney-breast is not more than two feet thick where he is. We should never get through it in time to save his life. You had better go up again, Master Sweep, and try if you can get him down."

"Well, I will, sir; but I don't know how to manage it. When I was up last time, I hung to the young beggar's feet the whole of my weight, and that didn't pull him away. Perhaps you'll be kind enough when I sings out to catch hold of my feet and hang on to me, and I will hang on to his, and that will be two men's weight hanging on to him; if that doesn't pull him down, nothing will."

"Very well; up you go, then," said Mr. Hammersley.

And once more Tom went up the chimney, and, having arrived at the "strait place" where the unhappy Sam had stuck fast, he grasped in his relentless paws the little, slender, emaciated legs of this poor child; then hanging the whole of his herculean body with its full weight to them, and finding that the poor, delicate child was not moved by it, he sung out, "Now, hang on me, below there, carpenter."

Quick at the word, the carpenter, a full-sized man, stepping up into the chimney and catching hold of Tom's foot, hung to him.

"Oh! oh! oh!" screeched the poor little creature, torn by this terrific violence, bleeding, bruised, and mangled by the sharp edges of the bricks, between which he had stuck.

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"Hurra! he's giving way—here he comes," cried Tom, and, with a violent sound, down all three came rolling into the grate.

"Pick him up—pick him up," said Mr. Hammersley.

Well might he say, "Pick him up!" Taking the poor child in their arms, streaming with blood, cut, insensible, and the life all but crushed out of him, they laid him on the kitchen-floor and sent for a surgeon.*

In a few minutes the surgeon came.

"You must take this case to the hospital," said he. "Do what we can for it, there's very little hope, and be as quick in taking him there as possible."

"Please, sir, hospitals won't admit sweeps, sir," said Tom.

"No, they won't as general patients; but this is a case of accident—violent death. They will take this child in under the circumstances. Put him into your donkey-cart, and drive him off directly, and I will run beside you."

Once more the donkey-cart came into requisition, and Sam, who had so lately sat there, in life, but not in health, was carried—a fainting, insensible, bruised, torn, mangled apology for humanity—into the accident ward, where, before long, he ceased to enable his fellow-man to trade upon his mortal agonies.

Tom waited near the hospital until the porter came out, and told him that "his boy was dead."

When, getting into his cart without a word, he drove off slowly, saying, as he drove away, "Well, I'm blowed if I arn't down upon my luck! What does the boys mean by dying off in this way?"

Ah, what did they mean, Richard Cobden? What did they mean, John Bright—Arthur Roebuck, of Sheffield, immaculate member!—Hastie, honourable member for Glasgow—Phinn, thou learned and liberal member for Bath—Hutchins, thou oracle of Lymington—and Bass, thou pale maltster for Derby? What did they mean? You, perhaps, can explain—you who threw out the bill for the relief of these poor wretches? Per-

* For the harrowing details of this case, Samuel Wl.tt, see Lords' evidence, Answer 216, in Appendix.

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haps you will be good enough to explain to the British public what did they mean. Perhaps you will explain to the American nation what they meant by dying off in this most inconsiderate manner—little helpless wretches of eleven years of age! No! Will you not explain—at present? Perhaps, most honourable members of the House of Commons, you will prefer explaining this interesting matter to the English mothers of your constituencies at the next general election—and also the claim it gives you to their votes and confidence, and the honour you have brought upon your country by your conduct in Parliament!

CHAPTER XIX.

"FRIEND, hast thee got any chimney-sweeper in thy house of the name of Thomas Burman?"

"There is a chimney-sweeper and his boy in the tap-room," answered the keeper of a low public-house in Nottingham. The questioner was a mild and benevolent-looking person, advanced in years, a member, as his language imported, of the admirable society of Friends.

Yes, Men of America, in England, as in the United States, the mission of the Quakers is still benevolence, and mercy, and well-doing.

William Wood was the name of this worthy and excellent man, who, having spent his youth in honourable industry as a merchant, dedicated to God what was left of his old age; and, having seen the iniquities perpetrated under the climbing system, devoted what few years were left him to a humble endeavour to mitigate the atrocities committed under that system; and, if possible, to get respected the laws that had been enacted to remove this disgrace from Great Britain.

"In the tap-room is he, landlord? Wilt thou be kind enough to tell him that one William Wood would be glad enough to speak to him?"

"You can go in yourself, sir. There is nobody there but the sweep and his child."

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Ah! if the benevolent Quaker could have told who that child was, how true and sturdy a friend that helpless little being would have found! Ah! if the haughty Marquis of Hardheart could have known how near to his stolen heir was one of the truest hearts, one of the most indefatigable of Friends, how a large portion of his wealth would have been freely offered to secure his interference! Ah! if that unfortunate and oppressed child could have been released, how eagerly his tale would have been received and acted on! how speedily he would have burst the bonds that bound him to filth, and violence, and ignorance, and crime! But in this world man's power to do evil seems unlimited—his powers to do good are circumscribed by all the material barriers in existence.

"Friend," said the Quaker, advancing to the chimney-sweep, "passing by the hospital not long since, I learned that a poor little child hath been killed in a chimney to-day; and I have made many inquiries for the master, and I am told that he was thy boy."

A frown instantly arose on the face of Mr. Thomas Burman.

"Nay, friend, thee need not be alarmed," said the Quaker. "I am not come to reproach thee. God and thine own conscience will be quite enough for thee. But I am come to ask thee why thou dost not respect the law, and sweep with a machine? I am told this is not the first boy's life thou hast lost. Why dost thou not sweep with a machine? Thou wouldst find it do the work much better than these poor boys."

The sweep looked at the Quaker for a minute or two from top to toe, and then looked round the room, as much as to say, "If I had you in the open air, old man, I would very soon talk to you; but here I dare do nothing."

Undismayed by the evident sullenness of the man's mind, the Quaker pursued his errand of mercy.

"Friend, dost thee know that one or two children's lives have just been lost in Manchester by the unlawful employment of climbing-children, and that our Society is determined to prosecute offenders by the law."

"You won't get much by that," said Tom. "The magis-

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trates themselves employ all the climbing-boys. You may prosecute; they'll never convict."*

"Thee sayest true. There would be no difficulty in carrying out the law, if the magistrates, who are sworn to respect it, did not violate at once their oaths and their duty; but that will not help the man Gordon, at Manchester, for he is to be prosecuted before the Lord Chief Baron Pollock. The Lord Chief Baron is one of her Majesty's Judges of Assize; and thou knowest her Majesty's judges respect their oaths, and do their duty; and the chances are, that Gordon will meet his proper punishment, by some ten years' transportation.† Now, friend, I wish to know whether thou wouldst like transportation."

"Why, I should like that as little as you would, I should think."

"Well, then, why dost thee not follow the law, and sweep chimneys with the machine?"

"'Cos the machine won't answer."

"Friend, thee dost not speak the truth. Not only will the machine answer, but it is so easily used that I have tried it for years in all my chimneys—and I have more than twenty in my house—and it sweeps every one."

"Well, but it requires great knack in sweeping them."

"Friend, what thee sayest is not true. It requires no knack in sweeping them, for all my chimneys are swept by machine by my gardener, who knows nothing of thy trade, and wishes to know less. Why art thou so obstinate that thou wilt not give it a fair trial?"

"Well, then, if you must know, Master Quaker, I can't give it a fair trial. Where am I to get the money to buy a machine?"

"Well, friend, if thee spent a little less money on that," pointing to the pewter measure before him, "and would only save thy money up a little more, thou wouldst soon put by enough to buy a machine."

* As to this fact, see the evidence before the House of Lords' Committee, Questions 234, 635, 663, 905, 1226.

† William Wood was quite correct in his anticipation. This was just the sentence that Chief Baron Pollock gave him.

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"No, I shouldn't, old un. Machines cost five or six pounds."

"Nay, friend, thee knowest better. Thee canst get a very good machine for one pound sixteen. What dost thee get for sweeping a chimney with a boy?"

"Why, only eightpence."

"Well, eightpence; and thee can sweep twelve of them in a day, and thou hast eight shillings. Six days in the week give thee forty-eight shillings at the end of the week, besides the money thou makest by the soot. If thou wilt let the gin-pot alone, thou canst live easily on a pound a-week. I have lived on it myself, friend, when I was a young man, and know what I am talking about. Thy boys cost thee nothing, for they get broken victuals enough to live on; so thou mayest if thou pleasest, friend, put by from ten to twenty-eight shillings every week, and that would enable thee to buy at least two machines every month: so how canst thee tell me thou canst not afford it? But suppose I was to lend thee a machine, wilt thou undertake to pay me a small part of its value, if I take the trouble to send some one to thee for it, every day?"

"Well, perhaps I might; but I don't think you are likely to do that; all you rich people, I find, are much more ready to talk about us poor sweeps than put your hand in your pockets and help us."

"Well, but, friend, thou art mistaken. I am likely to do it; and, to come to business, if thou wilt take a respectable lodging in Nottingham this very day, I will give thee a good machine; I will take thee round to several of my friends, and thou shalt have their chimneys to sweep. I will only charge thee twenty shillings for the machine, and thou shouldst only pay me a shilling a-day for it till thou hast paid for the whole capital. Wilt thou do that? Come!"

The sweep made no answer, and a brief pause ensued in the conversation.

"Thou wouldn't like to see the face of Brother Pollock over an indictment for manslaughter, thou knowest."

"Bless your Brother Pollock, and you too!" exclaimed the angry sweep, when thus pushed to the wall.

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"Curses, like chickens, friend, come home to roost," said the Quaker. "Wilt thou take my offer of the machine?"

"'Tis precious hard work working them machines. I don't like them."

"'Tis harder work, friend, being transported for sending up chimneys such little things as that," pointing to Totty.

The sweep's face underwent a change in a moment, as the Quaker's finger pointed towards that poor little fellow who, with his large eyes and regular features, sat beside his brutal master, devouring every word of the conversation between them.

"Well, sir, I will try your machine, if you likes," said the sweep, who would have offered to do anything to turn off the Quaker's attention from the child. "Where can I see it?"

"Come home with me, friend, to my house; I will show thee the machine, and thou shalt sweep one of my chimneys with it; but, before that, go with my gardener, who will see that thou takest a respectable lodging, and then the machine shall be left in thy hands, and I will keep my word with thee and speak to my friends."

CHAPTER XX.

"My gardener tells me, friend, thou hast got a very respectable lodging," said the Quaker, coming out into his yard to speak to Tom Burman, as he and Totty waited there on the following morning.

"Yes, your honour," said Tom, putting his hand to his head.

"Well, then, friend, the first thing is to show thee my new machine. Follow me."

The Quaker led the way into his garden, and there the gardener produced a machine with a flexible whalebone-head, of the circumference of about eighteen inches, and perfectly flat. This screwed on to a series of short joints of Malacca cane, being, in fact, the machine then newly brought out by Mr. Glass, of London.

"That machine will sweep none, sir," said Tom. "How is

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that machine, I should like to know, to go round the corners?"

"Friend, if thee canst go round the corners of life half as well as this will go round the corners of a chimney, thou wilt do very well. However, I will soon convince thee how this machine sweeps. Dost thou know of any chimney in Nottingham which has been swept to-day?"

"Yes, your honour; I have just parted with a chimney-sweep down the street, and I saw his boy's brush out at the chimney-pot, and he is busy sweeping there now."

"Well, then, friend, I will back my machine against his brush; so, gardener, come along, buckle up thy machine. I will go to the house straight."

In a few minutes the whole party had left William Wood's dwelling, and went to the house in question.

"Friend," said the Quaker to the woman that owned the house, "I hear thee hast got the sweeps here."

"Yes, sir, here they be, hard at work."

"Well, thou wilt be glad to hear that some benevolent persons in London have invented a machine to sweep chimneys, in compliance with the Act of Parliament to do away with the cruelties to the climbing-boys."

"Be there any cruelty?" said the old woman, opening her eyes. "Well, that is very funny! I never knew of that."

"That is very possible, my good woman; there are many people in the world who never heard of God, but yet He is close to us, notwithstanding. Wilt thou allow my man to sweep one of thy chimneys with this new machine?"

"No, ifegs, that I won't! you will knock down the bricks, mayhap, and do all sorts of injury."

"Well, friend, thou knowest my name, William Wood, and that I am blessed with some little substance, and don't often break my word. I pledge thee that whatever injury my machine does to thy chimney I will make it good four-fold."

"Well, sir, I know your name, I must say I do; for you sent coals in the winter to Betty Fagin, our lodger, while she and her husband were sick, poor souls! and as you pass your

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word to me, I believe you will keep it. Go in, then, but dont'e make a smother, that's a good man !"

With this permission they all entered, and found a little sweep-boy just coming out of the kitchen-chimney.

"Now, then, friend," said Mr. Wood, turning to Tom Burman, "dost thee think that this is a chimney that the machine won't sweep ?"

"How is it, boy ?" said Burman, turning to the little climber. "Has it got any bends in it ?"

"Yes, sir," said the boy; "it has got a very bad bend halfway up."

"How far does the bend go ?"

"Right on to the top, sir."

"Which way does the bend go ?"

"To the right, sir."

"There, sir, that'll do; I'll back your machine won't go up that chimney. I'll bet you half-a-crown, sir, your machine won't sweep that chimney."

"Friend, for a man that can't afford to buy a machine, thou art very free with thy half-crowns. Thou must know I never bet. I will give thee five shillings if the machine cannot sweep the chimney. Now, gardener, unbuckle it, and let us see what is to be done. I say, little boy, have you swept the chimney quite clean ?"

"Yes, sir, very clean."

"Very good."

In a few seconds the head was screwed on to the first two or three joints, and the gardener put it into the chimney. He then replaced the soot-cloth; and as there was no hole in the middle with an arm to it, which is desirable for using the machine, so as to keep the apartment clean, they, by the consent of the chimney-sweep, ripped a little slit in the middle of the soot-cloth, and through this passed all the succeeding joints one after another.

Presently the machine stopped in its upward progress, and did not yield immediately to the gardener's pressure.

"There, sir ! do you see that ?" said Tom Burman, in extasy 'yo ur machine won't go any further than where that first bend

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comes, sir. Your machine is stuck fast; it's no good whatever —it won't go a bit."

"Won't he?" said the old gardener, in a gruff voice, and giving the cane a gentle twist. "That's all you know about it. Look ee there;" and, as he said this, up went the canes once more, until at last the gardener turned round to William Wood, "There, sir, the brush is out of the pot."

"Now, friend," said William Wood, "get thee out into the street, and see if thou canst see the machine out at the top of the chimney."

Tom Burman, who certainly expected his five shillings, looked rather downcast at this, took his way out into the street, followed by the Quaker; and there, certainly, protruding from the chimney-pot, was seen the whalebone-brush extending in a flat, cake-like form all round the chimney, the cane going down through the centre of it.

"Friend, art thee convinced now that the machine will sweep a chimney?"

"Well, sir, it has gone through it, but I don't think that it will bring the soot down."

"All I can say, friend, is, that the soot must be very firmly made if it can stand that. But come inside again, and let us see."

The Quaker and Tom immediately returned to the house.

"Now, gardener," said the Quaker "sweep that chimney thoroughly, and bring that brush down."

"I will, sir," said the old gardener; and once more drawing the cane some way down the chimney with a slow but strong pressure, and then in the same manner pushing it a few feet up again, he gradually brought it down back into the kitchen, unscrewing joint after joint as it came down the chimney, and taking care that throughout the whole of its course it swept three or four times over each part of the flue.

"Gardener, did you take care to clean the grate out before you put your machine up?"

"Oh, yes, sir; I cleaned it thoroughly. Every bit of the soot that I bring down belongs to the machine."

"Well, now then draw thy brush out of the chimney, and let see what that comes to."

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As the gardener followed the Quaker's words, he gradually unpinned the soot-cloth, and there was a heap of soot lying in the grate sufficient to fill a man's hat.

"Why, you lazy young beggar, you arn't half done your work!" said the master sweep to the boy, giving him a cut on the back.

"Friend, thee must not strike the child," said the Quaker, interposing his hand, and receiving the blow. "Remember, when a child sweeps a chimney, he does it in the dark, and it must be by guess work; but it is the very province of machinery to do things mechanically infinitely better than any handwork can do it. The brush is made on purpose, so as to expand and fill the whole chimney, and to touch it all equally. 'Tis not the child's fault—it is the merit of the machinery; and if thou doubtest that, I will put my machine into any other chimney in the house you point out; and if you sweep it yourself afterwards, or the boy sweep it afterwards, he shall not be able to bring down a teacupful of soot. What do you think of that?"

"I think your honour is mistaken, sir," said the sweep. "I never heard of machinery being able to sweep a chimney, and I don't think it can—that is, not equal to a boy. Missus, which of your chimneys up stairs wants sweeping most?"

"Oh, the lodger's room, first floor, they've had a deal of sickness this year, fires night and day, and I know it has not been swept for four months; and fires catching constantly."

"Well, friend, thou canst not have a better chimney than that is; come up stairs. Come along, gardener; buckle up thy machine."

In a few minutes the parties all adjourned up stairs, and the gardener fixing the soot-cloth, and putting the machinery into the sitting-room chimney, joint after joint vanished up the flue, until once more he carried the brush out at the top.

"Come, friend, come and see," said the Quaker, running down stairs with all the vigour of a young man, followed by all the sweeps, and by this time a little crowd had assembled outside the house, and there was evident the brush of a machine.

This being duly observed, they all returned in again.

"All right, gardener; sweep it well."

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"Yes, I'll take care of that," said the gardener, and again he very carefully brought his brush down, passing it three or four times over every space in the chimney.

While this was being done, William Wood said to the mistress of the house, "Now, my good friend, this is one of the dirtiest chimneys in thy house, is it?"

"Yes, that I'm sure it is."

"Well, now, just go and look upon the linen of the bed, and upon that nice clean cloth on the dressing-table, and see if thou canst find any soot upon it."

"Oh, I suppose it will be covered."

"I do not suppose any such thing. Come and see," taking the old woman over to both places.

"Well, I declare!" said she. "I never saw a chimney swept so cleanly; there bean't none, sure enough!"

"Well, friend, thee shalt wait until the soot is gathered up, and thou wilt not then find any more than thou seest now."

In a few minutes the gardener withdrew the machine from the chimney, took down the soot-cloth, and the immense pile of soot which had collected in the grate was carefully shovelled into the sweeps' bag.

"There, sir," said the gardener, turning to the Quaker, "that chimney is swept clean enough, I'm sure."

"Now, friend," said the Quaker, turning to the master sweep, who, with the two boys, stood watching the operation, "remember, I will have no hand in breaking the law, which says, 'Thou shalt not sweep a chimney by any youth under twenty-one years of age;' but, if either of you two men, being above twenty-one years of age, can go up that chimney, and bring down one quarter as much soot as the machine brought down from the other chimney after your boy had swept it, I will give to such man this piece of money." And the Quaker took out a sovereign, and laid it, most temptingly, down upon the table.

"Why, your honour, there is no one here to say a word about breaking of the law, but this little boy here will get up without any harm coming to him; he has been up just now."

"No, friend, I will not break the law if I know it; that also thou knowest. There are some men in Nottingham of small

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growth; if thou wantest this sovereign, thou canst send off for one of the small sweeps, and I will wait."

The two sweeps put their heads together for a minute. "There is a man, sir, in Nottingham, who was a Newmarket jockey. He is twenty-five years of age, and he is not much bigger than a boy of thirteen. We will go for him, sir."

"Very well, friend, very well—Newmarket jockey it shall be; and he shall ride for my 'sweep stakes,'" said the Quaker, punning.

Accordingly, Tom Burman remained in the room, and the other "master sweep" hurried off for "Turfey Jem," the Newmarket jockey.

"Now, dame," said the Quaker, "while the jockey is coming, look round thy room and see where the dirt is; we have got all the soot out, and, as far as the machine is concerned, the sweeping is over. Come here to the bed. Is there any on the sheet or the counterpane?"

"Well, I declare!" said the old woman, looking down with a most scrutinising glance. "I never saw a chimney swept with so little dirt in my life."

"Now, look at thy dressing-table."

"No, there be no dirt there."

"Dirt, my good friend; thou might have had a satin couch in the room, and there would not have been a soil upon it."*

"Well, I do believe I might; though satin couches is not so very common with us poor folks in Nottingham, I trow."

Presently steps were heard upon the stairs—the door opened, and in came the master sweep with a little weasened old fellow, black of case as "Erebus," not much bigger than a full-grown boy of fourteen.

"Here is Turfey Jem, your honour, said the sweep.

"Very glad to see thee, Turfey Jem," said the Quaker. "How old art thou?"

"Twenty-six next birthday, your honour," said Jem, catching hold of a lock of his hair.

"Art thou turned a chimney-sweep from jockey, friend?"

* See Appendix, evidence before House of Lords' Committee, No. 234.

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"Yes, I be, your honour."

"What made thee change trades so much for the worst?"

Turfey Jem looked suspiciously at the Quaker for a minute or two from under his bushy eyebrows, and then sulkily replied, "I betted on the wrong horse, your honour, as your honour may have done before now."

"No, friend, thank you, I never bet on any horse; but I quite understand your case. I suppose you won your bet, and the man whose horse you rode lost it—was not that it?"

A general laugh against the sweep here told the tale of the unfortunate jockey—who, the Quaker shrewdly surmised, had been obliged to abandon his calling from having somewhat too openly "sold" his master. Being, therefore, too dangerous to trust in a racing-stable again, he had been compelled to have recourse to his present calling.

"Well, friend, what thee hast done with horses is neither here nor there. Canst thee sweep a chimney well?"

"Yes, I can, your honour."

"Dost thee see the sovereign lying on the table?"

"Yes, I see that plain enough, sir, and a very good sight it is to see at all times, particularly in one's purse."

"Well, now, this sovereign, friend, I have promised to give to these two master sweeps if they can send any man above twenty-one up that chimney, who, with all his sweeping, can bring down half as much soot as will fill my hat."

"Very well, your honour. I think I'll soon get hold of the sovereign. Can you give us, any of you, a good new brush?"

"Oh, yes," said one of the sweeps; "here is a brush that was new last week," producing one which had hitherto been concealed in a bag.

"That will do," said Turfey Jem, looking at it and getting up into the chimney which had been previously well cleaned; the soot-cloth was pinned up over the aperture, and in a few minutes his brush was heard rattling up the chimney.

"Will you come out, sir, and see the brush at the top, sir?" said the chimney-sweeper.

"No, thank thee, friend; that is thy affair," said the Quaker,

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very wisely declining to leave the room until the question of his sovereign was decided.

A wink passed between the two chimney-swecpers, and a slight laugh, and down they both went into the court.

In a very short time they were heard to make a cry on seeing Turfey Jem's brush protruding from the chimney, but the sound of which rattled strongly down into the room where the Quaker stood, and then the implement was heard coming all the way down the chimney, being well used the whole way.

At last, from the shaking behind the soot-cloth, it was clear that he had returned from his dark mission, and with great eagerness the two master chimney-sweeps unpinned the cloth.

Great was their consternation, and sadly their visages fell, when they looked into the grate.

"Why, where is the soot, Jem?" said one of them, as the jockey once more stood upon the hearth.

"Why, there it is," said he, pointing to a few loose grains here and there.

"That!" said Tom Burman contemptuously; "why, that would not fill a teacup."

"I cannot help that," said Turfey Jem. "I could not bring soot down if it was not there, you know. You must pay me my shilling for going up whether or no."

"What is the matter, friend?" said the Quaker. "Cannot you raise a teacupful of soot now? Just gather it together and let us see. Mistress, lend us a breakfast-cup, and see what we can collect together."

"Well, I declare, to think of that now!"

Taking a cup out of the cupboard, they attempted to fill it with the soot gathered by the men sweeping, and failed.

"I think, friends, my sovereign is quite safe in my pocket," said the Quaker, and, taking the gold up from before the hungry eyes of the grown-up sweeps, he put it into his well-filled purse. "Still, thou shalt not have all thy labour for nothing: here is a shilling for each of ye. After this, friends, I think there can at least be no objection to the machine that it does not do its work. I have promised this man, Tom Burman, to lend him a machine and let him pay for it so much a week; and now, as you all three

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of you see how perfectly capable it is of saving the cruelty of employing those little children, I will do as much for you, Turfey Jem, and for you, too, master chimney-sweep, and I trust that neither of you will break the law any more. There, Burman, is the machine that has been tried. Gardener, give it into his charge, and every evening for twenty evenings my gardener will come to you for the instalment of one shilling. At the end of three weeks and two days, if you make no default, the machine is thine own; and you two, if you, each of you, like a machine on the same terms, you shall have it."

"Thank, your honour," said the two men. "When shall we come?"

"To-morrow week, if you like," said the Quaker.

Then, on receiving their assurance they would do so, William Wood gave half-a-crown to the mistress of the house; and, telling the two little chimney-sweepers to come to his house for their dinner, he went his way.

If anyone at this moment could have laid bare the breast of William Wood, and the breast of William Marquis of Hardheart, which, John Bright, which, Richard Cobden, which, Arthur Roebuck, do you consider would have been preferable to own?

CHAPTER XXI.

"GEORGE, dost thou think Burman is going on steadily now?" said the Quaker, looking into his hot-house, and addressing his gardener a week after the events recorded in the last chapter.

"Well, master, I think he is pretty steady now."

"Does he seem ready to pay thee thy shilling every evening when thou goest to him?"

"Yes, sir; he is always pretty ready with money."

"Canst thou make out at all how many chimneys he sweeps daily?"

"Well, I think I can, sir; I thought it as well just to keep

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a little bit of a score against him, and I have got a good deal down behind the door."

As the gardener said this, he half closed the door of the hothouse, and disclosed a long score written up, from which he proceeded to read off to his master the information desired. "Here is Mr. Hope, the grocer, sir, gave him three chimneys to sweep on Monday. On the same day, there was Mr. White, the sadler, gave him two: that was five eightpences, three and fourpence. The next day he had seven at Mr. Wilkinson's, the surgeon's, and four at Mr. Whittaker's, the attorney's, and six at Mr. Greenthredge's—that makes seventeen; that is eleven and fourpence he made on Tuesday."

"Well, George, you need not go into every case. How much dost thou make it out in the week?"

"Well, altogether I make it out that he has earned two pound three this week, and paid me six shillings out of it; so that he has put thirty-seven shillings into his pocket."

"Well, does he speak gratefully of the machine, George?"

"Well, sir, them cattle are not very much noted for their gratitude. I never heard him say much about it."

"No, friend, that is the worst of it—a sad lot to serve; but, then, George, if we often met with grateful people in this world, where would be the virtue of doing good?"

"Well, sir, that is very good of you to say it, but I must say I like to see a little gratitude myself. It oils the wheels a little."

"It is very well if you can get it, George; but sometimes you have to drive your wheels without oil, and put up with their creaking. How does he keep that poor little urchin of his?"

"Well, sir, pretty hard, as for a matter of that. The poor child, like the rest of them, is made to carry the machine as long as he can; and when he cannot carry it any longer, the master carries it on his own back."

"About what time do they give over sweeping in the morning?"

"About twelve o'clock."

"What do they do after that time, George? Could you see at all?"

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"Well, I never seed much of them, sir, except idling about; and as to all the little boys, they goes a gambling at pitch farthing, out upon the walls."

"Ah! that is the worst of it, George; none of these poor children are ever educated."

"Edicated, sir! they knows their right hand from their left, and I guess that is pretty much about what they do know."

"Well, do you think, now, that this man Burman would have any objection to my taking that little child of his, and having him instructed at all?"

"Well, I will ask him, sir, if you like, only at most times he seemed to me to be a surly, savage sort of fellow."

"Never mind that, George; see if thou canst do him good. Ask him by all means—do not say it comes from me, but just drop it casually—if he would like to have his son taught to read and write. Say how much more useful it would be to him in the trade; and then say, if he would like to have it done, you would do it for him."

"Well, I will, sir, this evening, when I go for the shilling."

Accordingly, in the evening, when the gardener went for his money, and after it was duly paid, he said to Burman, "Master has recommended pretty many customers to you, Burman."

"Yes," said Burman, "I get a few; 'tis precious hard work though, I can tell you, shoving that infernal machine up all those chimneys."

"Hard work, my man! What do you call hard work? You cannot have to put it up many chimneys?"

"Well, I have to clean eighteen or twenty chimneys a day with it sometimes. I call that pretty hard."

"Well, man, but look what profit you make out of it: think what eighteen eightpences come to. Why, that is twelve shillings, my boy. Twelve shillings a day—why, that is three pound twelve a week."

"No, no, it is not so much as that," said Burman, looking somewhat confused, as if detected in an unwilling *exposé* of his profits.

"Oh, yes, it is, though. Just look at the difference between you and me. I have been a gardener for the last twenty years,

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and my salary is sixteen shillings a week, and not a penny more, and I have to work in summer from five in the morning until six at night; and sometimes, when the forcing-season is on, I have to get up two or three times in the night, and all that for sixteen shillings. Why, you are a prince to me. You make three pound twelve a week; and what is it putting that machine up chimneys eighteen or twenty times a day? One time and another, it does not take you a quarter of an hour—that is four an hour; then suppose you begin at five in the morning, and you leave off at twelve in the day, there is seven hours, and you are never hard at work all that time, I know. Why, in that time you might sweep thirty chimneys. Then, you have the rest of the day for any improvement you like."

"Improvements! Why, you forget I have got to go and sift all the soot I have collected."

"Oh, don't tell me that, Burman. You know your boy does that. And then when you come to talking about soot, remember, besides all you make by using the machine, there is the profit of selling the soot into the bargain."

"You are too fast in your reckoning, Master Gardener, for us sweeps. You seem to forget that there are many houses we sweep among working-folks where they are too poor to give us halfpence or any other price, and we get nothing for the trouble of sweeping them but the soot we bring down. You seem to know so much of the trade, why don't you turn sweep yourself?"

"Well, that is neither here nor there. I do all my master's chimneys, and will do yours, if you pay me for it, in extra hours. Now, if I were you, I would make use of my spare time for education. I can read and write, and very often I get half-a-crown for managing a few books of account—you will find it very profitable."

"Profit! I shall profit none; I am too old to learn."

"Well, perhaps you be; but what do you say to your little boy there? I am quite sure master would send him to school for you an hour a day; and then, as soon as he could read and write, he would make a trifle or two for you."

To this remark Burman looked up very cunningly at the

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gardener, and, after eyeing him intently for a minute or two, he said, "Your master is a very good man. Your master is one of what they calls the society of Friends; you know they are all very good men; but don't you go for to flatter yourself he would have anything to do with sending a sweep to school. Everybody turns his back on a sweep; nobody cares a fig for us. We arn't Christians—we're not, you know; and though the parsons have some humbug about it, yet you may be sure we arn't got souls to save—we arn't. Your master send my little boy to school! No, he knows a game worth two of that. There is not a school in the kingdom would have him."

"What of that?" said the gardener, excited out of his usual prudence. "I know that schools do turn up their noses at climbing-boys, but my master is none of that sort, I can tell you; and if there was no school that would take your boy in, rather than he should not learn the Word of God, master would give him an hour a day and teach him hisself. I know he would; he as good as told me so."

"Oh, he did, did he?" said Burman, with a leer. "When was your master talking to you about edicating my little boy?"

"Oh, he said something about it this morning," said the gardener, perceiving something passing in the other one's mind.

"Well, then, you say I am very much obliged to him, but I will just think of it a little. I don't see why, when I can't read and write, that my boy, who is my servant, should know better than his master. Good evening, sir;" and Burman suddenly rose up and took the door in his hand.

The gardener, who quite understood this hint, said, "Well, it was kind enough of master to offer it, you know, and you will just think it over."

Burman made no reply, but gave a sly nod. In another second the door was closed, the gardener went home, and Burman sat down on his stool before the fire, and sank his head on his two hands, as if intently thinking of what was to be done.

The next morning was Sunday; and about five o'clock in the morning poor little Totty was roused up out of his sleep, a crust of bread put into his hand, and told to follow the sweep.

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The latter, with his bundle of canes on his back, went out at the front door, waited a moment for Totty in the court, taking him by the hand, and then silently walking down one of the main thoroughfares of Nottingham, walked straight into the high-road leading to Birmingham.

After walking for some miles, he turned off to the right, and through a number of unfrequented thoroughfares directed their course towards Staffordshire.

Alas, poor Totty! once more was the chance of rescue snatched away from him.

Even the bare idea of sending him to school had alarmed the guilty sweep; and fearful of what it might lead to, but certain that it must take the child from under his eye for one or more hours every day, and give an endless opportunity for questioning him and conversation, Burman no sooner got an inkling of the kind proposal of the Quaker than this danger, added to the temptation of cupidity, induced him, at one stroke, to withdraw the child further off from any chance of rescue and plunder his generous benefactor of the thirteen shillings still due to him.

CHAPTER XXII.

THERE is a saying among seamen, "That there is no Sunday out of seven fathoms' water"—meaning that in general the ship is in water too deep for anchorage, and that her sails being set, the Sabbath does not interrupt the working of the crew.

Alas! the same might, we fear, be extended far beyond the deep sea, and to take in many classes beyond those of the storm-tossed mariner.

"There is no Sunday for the climbing-boy!"

Burman halted at a village on his path about seven o'clock in the morning; and after calling industriously round with the well-known sweeps' cry, discovered seven chimneys where his services were wanted, and proceeded to render them in due form.

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This business done, the sweep proceeded to get his breakfast and to give poor Totty a few of the broken victuals, as usual.

These, also, were soon finished; and the poor child, who had been eating them in the yard of the country-inn, while his master was feeding in the tap-room, stole gently on to the open gates, which commanded a view of the little village church and the country people all going to it, dressed in their best.

As the poor child was gazing intently at this spectacle of the people going to church, a gay carriage and pair of the lady of the parish drove up to the door of the church, and set down the family who thus had been conveyed to their place of worship.

"Oh, that is Willie's carriage! that is Willie's carriage!" cried the child, running out into the highway, overcome with the resemblance and colour to his father's chariot and horses, and bursting into tears.

The sweep's eyes, however, were wide awake, and, dashing after him, he caught the poor child in the middle of the high-road by one of his ears, and, pulling it till it bled, dragged him back to the little country-inn.

"What is the younker a-saying?" said the ostler.

"Oh, I don't know—some stuff-a-nonsense. Never mind what he is saying."

"I say, here, landlord, I see the church is going in. You wish to get us out of your house, don't you?"

"Well, the constable will be round here presently, I dare say," said the landlord. "Does that little boy want to go to church?"

"I do, sir! I do, sir!" said poor Totty; "there is Willie at church—I know he is."

"Hold your tongue, you little vagabond!" said the sweep, striking him upon the mouth, and making his lips bleed against his teeth with the violence of the blow. "What do you think decent Christian people would say to see a black little blackguard like you putting his face inside the door?"

"Well, that is true enough," said the landlord; "but he is the first little sweep-boy that ever I met that wanted to go to church. It is a pity he arn't got some decent clothes to go in. If my mistress was at home, I dare say she would lend you

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some. We lost our only poor boy with the measles not three months ago. If you choose to stay till the afternoon, I will see what she says to him."

"Oh, master, you need not trouble yourself. I should like to catch myself axing your wife for the loan of your poor little lost child's clothes to send a young sweep to church."

"Well, true, she has wrapped them up in lavender, I know, ever since. Here, my little man," said the landlord, "don't cry. Here is a cake for you."

And poor Totty, with his heart bursting, took the cake in his hand. Tom, giving him a hitch in his fingers that nearly dragged his arm off, drew him out into the road, and away they went once more on their journey into Staffordshire.

In this way they continued travelling, every now and then finding a little work to do at the roadside villages, until in the middle of the week they arrived at the gates of the lordly hall tenanted by the rich Lady Burmeister.

"That 'ere seems a likely house for something to do," said the sweep, looking at the enormous stacks of chimneys that arose from all parts of the hall; and having passed unchallenged through the lodge-gates, with Totty at his heels, they walked up one of the drives that led to the back entrance.

On the road, who should they meet but the rich Lady Burmeister herself. Now, Lady Burmeister was one of those good people in England who set themselves out as patterns of country excellence. If anyone was visiting her at her house, and did not go twice to church on Sunday, she was shocked at them. She had never had more than one relation in the world except her husband and parents, and this relation was an only sister. In travelling abroad, it did so happen that this sister fell in love with, and married, the celebrated Count Gentillé, a man of large possessions near Milan—a man celebrated for his personal appearance, and equally so for the rare accomplishments of his mind. In the fulness of her heart, Lady Burmeister's sister wrote back to tell her of her approaching marriage, and all the good qualities of her future husband, expatiating on the delight she should have in presenting this accomplished nobleman to his future sister-in-law, and at the end of the

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letter mentioning, as the only drawback to her happiness, the difference of faith between herself and the count, who was a Roman Catholic. "However," the lady added, "the count is by no means bigoted." He did not object to being married by a Protestant clergyman at the Florentine embassy; and she had great hopes that she should be able to bring him over to the Protestant faith.

In answer to this affectionate epistle, Lady Burmeister wrote back, in the full tide of her indignation, to say that whatever the qualities of the count might be, and however strongly her sister might be attached to him, it was enough for her (Lady Burmeister) that the count was lacking in that great essential to all existence—true religion. If her sister married him, she must never again expect to change words with Lady Burmeister, for, however warm their sisterly intercourse had hitherto been, the knowledge that her sister was married to a man unsound in the truths of religion would at once sever all ties between them; and, for all the dissonance in life, this religious error was "quite sufficient."

This was not all: Lady Burmeister kept her word. Her sister married, as woman will, the man of her choice. Believing that the count would be able to make his way, she brought him to her sister's mansion, and was absolutely turned from the door.

It may be easily imagined from this sketch of Lady Burmeister's sacrificing sisterly affection to religious principle, that in all the minor matters of life she was equally severe and strict in her requirements: this, indeed, was so. If any of the labourers in the neighbourhood of her great hall got tipsy, they were "horrid wretches." If the workmen on her estate got a little merry at her "harvest home," they were "vicious creatures." If any of the people in the villages took a straying hare occasionally, they were "outcasts from society." If any of the surrounding gentry got a little tinged with liberal politics, they were "destructive democrats." While, if a man should venture to hint for a moment that any of the Protestant clergy of the Church of England were worldly in their feelings, or lax in their practice, "Nothing could exceed the horror of their

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impiety." "Once let me see," she was accustomed to say, "that a man is lax in principle, and I have done with him—I have done with him. For me that is *quite sufficient.*"

Seeing how strict the good lady was in her notions about others, it may be imagined that she would naturally refer everything to the perfection of her own mind; and this was what she did. No person in the world could be supposed to be a more perfect pattern of all the virtues and proprieties of life; and, if she did not give tithes of "mint and cummin," she did that which was very little short of it.

Poor Tom Burman was not at all aware of the sort of household deity he approached, when he drew near to the lady's presence, or he, no doubt, would have been penetrated with the utmost amount of awe and terror. As it was, he merely passed her with the usual salutation of raising his hand to his head.

"Stop, my man. Where are you going?"

"Going up to the hall, please my lady"—quite wise enough to venture on giving a title of rank, even if she were not entitled to it.

"Has the butler ordered you to sweep the chimneys?

"No, my lady. I was just going to see whether anything in my line was wanted."

"You do not belong to the village, then, my man, do you?"

"No, my lady."

"Oh, you came here very luckily, then; for it was only last night the butler told me that there were several of our chimneys—I think fifteen—that wanted sweeping, and he was going to send over to the town of Beerlees to tell the sweep to come. There is a sweep very much wanted in the village, and there is plenty of occupation for him at all times."

"Well, marm, I am not particular where I lives," said Tom. "If your ladyship should give me the job at the Hall, I daresay I could give you satisfaction."

"Oh, very well," said the lady.

At this moment her late husband's younger brother joined them. He had succeeded to his childless brother's title, but was still a bachelor. He had himself a house in the same county

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happened to be staying on a few days' visit with his sister-in-law.

"I was just saying, Sir George," she said, turning to the baronet, "that I wished very much we had a good sweep in the village: 'tis very awkward to have to send to Beerlees always to have the chimneys swept."

"Oh, you had better let the butler see to that, had you not, Lady Burmeister?" said Sir George, with a slight curl of his lip, somewhat shocked to find his sister-in-law condescending to discuss anything with a chimney-sweeper.

"No," said the lady; "that will do very well for those who are afraid to look to their own affairs. I attend to my estate myself. I leave you to your stewardom. There is nothing that goes on in my household that is not a fit matter for my interference. Go to the house, my man, and arrange with the butler at what hour you can come to-morrow morning."

Immediately Tom trudged off to the back door; and having delivered his message to one of the servants, the butler made his appearance.

"Sweep," said that great man condescendingly, "what is the matter?"

"The lady has sent me to ax you, sir, at what hour it will be convenient for me to come to sweep the chimneys at the Hall?"

"Sweep the chimneys, my man? Why, that little boy won't be able to sweep our chimneys, will he?" (pointing to Totty.)

"Oh, no, your honour, he never sweeps the chimneys; he only goes to carry the brush; he arn't learnt yet to sweep chimneys: he is not five years old yet. I always sweeps them with machine. A new statty, sir, passed in Parliament, makes it unlawful to sweep with anything else."

"Hang the statute, my man! we don't regard statutes here—nothing but my lady's will. She won't have the machines used, because it dirts the furniture. I will step back to my lady with you; I don't think she will allow you to sweep the chimneys with the machine."

Accordingly, back to the presence of the perfect Lady Burmeister all three trudged; when they found her ladyship still

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busily engaged in her flower-garden, and Sir George walking by her side.

"If you please, my lady," said the butler, touching his hat; "the sweep tells me that you have ordered him to come and do the chimneys of the Hall to-morrow morning."

"Very true, Carrington; I have," said Lady Burmeister, with a most dignified bow.

"But, my lady, he tells me he sweeps the chimneys with a machine, on account of the new statute."

"The new statute! Sweep chimneys with a machine!" repeated the perfect lady. "Why, he had a little boy with him!"

"Yes, my lady; but it appears the boy is not five years old yet, and has not learnt to climb."

"Impossible, Carrington! I can't think of allowing such a thing as a machine to be used for sweeping my chimneys Here, my man," calling the sweep within hearing, "do you mean to say that you have so wasted your time that you have not taught that little boy of yours to climb chimneys?"

"No, my lady," said Tom, drawing near; "he is not five years old yet, my lady. We never puts them to it until they are five years old."

"Why, what an idle little urchin it must be! What is the use of him in your business, if he cannot climb the chimneys?"

"Please, my lady, he carries the brushes."

"Carries the brushes! is that all? I never heard of such a thing! How do you propose to sweep the chimneys in the Hall?"

"Please, my lady, since the new Act passed, they have invented a machine in London, and it does it better than the boys, my lady; it brings down the soot much more closer."

"I cannot believe it!"

"Oh, yes, it does, my lady; we tried it the other day at Nottingham." He then related the experiment made by William Wood, whom he had treated so scandalously.

"I do not care at all!" said the perfect lady. "I am quite sure, if you use that horrid machine in my chimneys, you will cover all my rooms with dirt and dust! I tell you, once for

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all, that I will not have the machine used—and that is quite sufficient."

"I assure you, my lady, it does not make a bit of dust or dirt. We tried it at Nottingham, and examined the sheets and table-cloths, and not a bit of dust comes down."

"Fellow, I tell you I will not have a bit of machine used in my house. I will have none of your new-fangled notions—and that is quite sufficient."

"Well, my lady, as you please—only you see its contrary to law now to use the boys."

"Contrary to law, fellow! Don't talk to me of what is contrary to law. Do you know my late husband, Sir William, who was a magistrate—"

"Yes, please, my lady; they told me in the village he was one of the severest magistrates on the bench, but we always find, please your ladyship, the stricter the magistrate in keeping the law to others, the more ready he is to break it himself."

"You are an insolent fellow to dare to say so. The law is all very well for poor people—persons of distinction are not to be bound by such nonsense; and that is quite sufficient."

"Well, please your ladyship, I always thought it was quite sufficient; but now there is some of the great lords of Parliament who says it is great brutality in us to employ them there tender infants," pointing to poor Totty, "to do the work which a little whalebone and bamboo can well effect much better."

"Great brutality, my man!" said Lady Burmeister, drawing herself up, and looking at the sweep as if she could annihilate him, "what do you mean?"

"Well, my lady," said the sweep, "I meant nothing, my lady, only 'great brutality.' That is the term them great lords uses I observe in the papers."

"Don't presume, sweep, to talk to your betters with that disgusting familiarity. Where can be the brutality, I should like to know, of any child going up my chimneys? They are very large and very wide, and I always make a point of asking them whether it is quite agreeable to them—and that is quite sufficient."

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"Oh, quite agreeable, my lady. I have no doubt it must be quite a pleasure to them infants to go up any chimney of your ladyship's," said Tom, getting a little sly and saucy, when he found he had lost all chance of being employed. "Only you see, my lady, chimneys is chimneys, and bricks is bricks; and if the infants as climbs your ladyship's chimneys rubs off the skin of their knees, as in course all infants will when their naked knees comes against the chimney-corners, why, I suppose infants bleed in your ladyship's chimney just as much as they do in any other chimneys."

"It is quite true, Lady Burmeister," said her brother-in-law, coming most unexpectedly to the rescue of the sweep; but, as is usual between brother and sister-in-law, there existed no love to spare between these titled people. "Though I am a magistrate in the county myself, I know all my chimneys are swept by boys who defy the Act of Parliament. The other day, by accident, I happened to come home late in the morning, and I found a little boy coming out of my kitchen-chimney, and his back and shoulders were covered with scars and bleeding, through coming in contact with the chimneys."

"That, sir, may be all very well in your chimneys, which, I have no doubt, are narrow, and badly constructed; but the chimneys of my hall are large and ample, and could hurt no child—and that is quite sufficient."

"Then, please my lady," said Tom, who was determined not to lose the job for want of pushing, "if the chimneys are all so good, marm, and so large, I have no doubt I can climb them myself. In olden times, my lady, they used to make the chimneys big enough for any man to climb."

"Indeed I should permit no such thing," said Lady Burmeister. "A great, big, hulking fellow like you going up my chimneys, who can tell what damage you may do? If you had known your duty to people of distinction, you would have taken care to instruct this child to climb the chimneys properly; and I shall neither permit you nor your machine to go up any chimney of mine—and that is quite sufficient. Butler, see this man off my grounds directly. You have your orders, and that is quite sufficient."

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When the unfortunate Tom Burman heard this autocratic decision, he knew, as he afterwards phrased it, that "the game was all up with him;" and as soon as he left the presence of the perfect, the religious, the all-sufficient Lady Burmeister —that lady who counted her income by thousands, and the various blessings of life by an almost infinite arithmetic—the conviction that he had no further chance of taking up his abode in the village, and making a certain income out of the "Hall," was the natural result produced upon his mind.

Bestowing a kick on the hapless little Earl of Hopemore, the "kidnapped," the oppressed heir of lofty titles and large possessions, he broke forth—"This comes, you little beggar! of sparing you. If I had stuck a tenpenny nail into your haunches, and driven you up a few chimneys, as I ought to have done, instead of listening to that psalm-singing, old Quakering beggar, William Wood, of Nottingham, I should not have lost the custom of such a house as that—one of the fust houses in the county of Stafford. May the Father of Evil take all machines for the future!" And, uttering a fearful curse, he took the bundle of machinery he had on his back, threw it down in the road, and stamped upon it until it was broken in every joint. He then gathered up the fragments, and, while Totty stood marvelling at this exhibition of frenzy, he deliberately pitched them into the ornamental water which they were passing at the moment.

What a spectacle was here displayed in the sight of Heaven! What a scene for reflection, Englishmen, is presented to you! Here do we see William Wood, a retired trader of Nottingham, who, by hard industry, had saved a little sufficiency, not exceeding, at the outside, £300 a-year—making a sacrifice of his worldly means to present a sweeper from his pocket with the machinery that was to save the oppression and the murder of helpless children; and, on the other hand, Lady Burmeister (left by her husband, without any exertion of her own, with more thousands than William Wood possessed hundreds), by her own unthinking cruelty and brutal prejudices, exasperating and goading the uneducated sweep, in a single moment, to kick down and destroy all that the philanthropy of William Wood

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had effected, and to resume his previous course of malignant violence and sanguinary lawlessness.

Ah, Lady Burmeister! for what have you to answer? Intrusted by the merciful and Almighty Father of mankind with so many thousands a-year, look what your influence and your position does for good or for evil! How, when you appear before the tribunal of Almighty God, will you answer for the amount of evil that you have inflicted, by the example of your high position, on the helpless climbing-children, by persisting in defying the laws of your country, by resisting the voices of humanity and justice, and by holding up this crying iniquity of cruelty and ignorance, when your voice and your position would have enabled you to effect so much good in putting them both down?

Is there any truth, or is there not any truth in that Bible?—in that Gospel which you make such a parade of upholding and following? Is there, or is there not any truth in that parable of our Lord in which the talents are given to the separate servants, and each one is to be called upon, on peril of an immortality of punishment, to account for the talents confided to his care?

Ah, Lady Burmeister! when at that awful hour you are called upon to account for your fortune, your influence, your position, what will you say, when the murders and the cruelties are placed before your view, that you have helped to continue among the climbing-children of Great Britain?

CHAPTER XXIII.

It was very easy, when the fit of passion was on him, for Tom Burman to smash, and trample under foot, and to throw into Lady Burmeister's lake that useful machine which the noble heart of William Wood had bestowed upon him, and out of the value of which he had the base ingratitude to cheat his benefactor; but when the butler escorted him from the lodge-gates and into the road beyond, the passion of the moment had a

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quick reaction in the mind of Tom; and he now had leisure to reflect that, while he had destroyed William Wood's stolen machine, poor little Totty at his side knew nothing of the art of climbing chimneys. It was, therefore, clear to him (Tom Burman) that, with all his love of himself, his disinclination to bear the work of machinery, his great fondness for sitting on the hearth while his boys climbed, and paid him the money for working, he was now without any ostensible means of existence. The generality of chimneys he was too large to climb himself; and though it was perfectly true he could have climbed the chimneys of this very old hall without doing them any of that injury which its gentle, generous, unselfish, and disinterested mistress pretended, yet still the generality of chimneys throughout the free, the very free, the happy, the very happy country of Great Britain, do not measure more than fourteen inches one way, by nine inches across; and into this small space, within which Tom Burman was ready to force the child, he was too knowing to venture his own athletic person.

What was now to be done? He had a few shillings in his pocket, and a feeble child by his side. Nothing was left him but to compel by any brutality in his power that poor helpless little infant to work for him, the stalwart idle vagabond, or both might be starved together.

Tom Burman was not the man to hesitate for a moment: he would sacrifice the life of twenty such poor little wretches as Totty. He would have done it rather than have gone without a single meal.

"I say, you young beggar! do you see that machine is no go? The rich folks won't have it, the magistrates' wives won't stand it, the gentry of Stafford won't have machinery—do you hear that, you little beggar? The next chimney we come to you must sweep, you little beggar! and if you don't, I'll cut the liver out of you—do you hear that?"

Poor Totty did hear it; and remembering all the brutalities, the cruelties, and the murders he had seen, his infant heart immediately comprehended what was before him, and he set up the most piteous cry.

"Stop your row, you young thief!" said Tom, striking him

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across the back with a heavy brush, and with a violence that took his breath utterly away from him, and left him with his mouth wide distended, unable for a few seconds to utter the piercing yell which soon made the aristocratic woods of Lady Burmeister echo again.

Hark, My Lady! In the luxurious halls of your mansion did you not hear that infant cry? Do you not know that that agony is produced by your conduct, and yours alone? Ah! could you imagine that cry echoed from the lungs of a young earl—echoed from the lungs of one who ought in the course of nature and a few years to be an English marquis, how would you start? how would you tremble? What would you not do to rescue a distinguished member of the English peerage, one of the great props of aristocratic England, a member of the House of Peers, only second in rank to any in the empire? Ah! Lady of Burmeister, greatly as you worship rank, unlimitedly as you adore wealth, infinitely as you "toady" all those who possess that double claim to English sympathy and English idolatry, do you not reflect that titles and wealth have only the endurance of a day, and that there is a Father in heaven who regards with still more attention the agony of the helpless and the cries of the poor? But, alas! though her woods re-echoed with poor Totty's misery, Lady Burmeister heard it not. If she had heard it, she would not have comprehended it, nor would she have appreciated the misery that produced it—albeit, that misery was of her own causing.

"Stop your row, you young beggar! or I will knock the lights out of you," said the gentle Tom, shaking his fist in the face of the young earl; and poor Totty, trembling at the ominous aspect of the being who possessed unlimited power over him, endeavoured, with all his might and with many a stifled sob, to control the expression of the misery—the despair that possessed him.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

All that day and the following night the sable pair travelled on. On the following morning, Tom Burman, begging a seat in a haggler's cart, got a lift of several miles, and in the course of the following noon Tom and Totty entered the populous and thriving town of Wolverhampton. After a rest of a few hours, and a slight refreshment, they once more set forward for that emporium of the metal trade, Birmingham, which they reached shortly before midnight. This vast place Tom Burman seemed to know in all its miserable windings, dirt, and smoke and squalor: everything that could most appall the human eye appeared perfectly familiar to Tom Burman, as he threaded the lowest parts of this vast town. About eleven o'clock Tom succeeded in gaining quarters in the house of Mr. Cantons, if quarters they could be called, as far as Totty was concerned; for he was allotted his usual place of repose, a soot-floor, without clothes or pillow, while Tom slept in some upper room in the same dwelling.

When morning dawned, poor Totty found himself surrounded by several children of the same age as himself, all pursuing the calling of sweeps.

The voice of Tom, sounding in his young ears like some forewarning of a malignant spirit, called poor Totty to his doom.

"Now, you young beggar!" said Tom, as soon as Totty had gained his feet, "we're going out to-day, mind, to begin your climbing as a sweep-boy. No more crying, or bag or brush for you; you will have to climb yourself for the future." Tom did not add, "Thanks to Lady Burmeister;" but, if he had spoken the truth, he might have said so.

In a few moments Tom found himself outside of the wretched hovel, together with another child, walking out to sweep some dwelling which Tom's friend, the housekeeper, had indicated to him as requiring their climbing services. After ten minutes' walking they arrived at the house, a tradesman's dwelling in the

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neighbourhood of St. Paul's-square. Little Totty, who knew what was before him, and, as far as an infant of his tender years could make up his mind to an awful extremity, fully concluded that his last hour was at hand, entered the kitchen, and beheld Tom fitting up the fatal cloth.

"Now, you young beggar!" said Tom, "you go into that chimney, and that boy will follow you. Do you see this? You are to put your back against one side of the chimney and your knees against the other; and, after you have got your back firmly fixed against the chimney, you must raise your knees and lift yourself up by them; and when you have got your knees well fixed, let go your back and lift that up a few inches; and then, when that is firmly fixed, raise your knees upon the other side; and mind, you young thief! you always take care not to raise your knees as high as your chin, for, if you do, you will stick fast; and if you stick fast, you will be smothered just as that boy was that you saw at Nottingham."

"Don't begin to blubber," said Tom, giving him a thump on his back with his fist—"'tis no use crying, you must go through it; and if you don't go through it, you must die in doing it, and any ways you must say nothing; and here this boy Fred must go after you with this 'ere bradawl, and every time you stop he is to stick it into your haunches."

As the inhuman brute said this, he showed Totty a cobbler's bradawl, with a sharp and glittering blade. He put it in the hand of the boy Fred, who, grinning with fiendish delight at the task assigned to him, seized that instrument of torture, which he had not only used before, but the pangs of which he had himself felt in early youth. Thus goaded, poor Totty, with feeble infant steps, mounted the kitchen-grate and inserted himself into the dark and fatal passage that reared itself before him.

In another second Tom had secured the soot-cloth with a couple of forks; poor Totty was essaying to work himself up the chimney, and the little imp of darkness Fred was behind him. In a few seconds a cry of agony was heard from Totty's lips.

"Give it to him, the young beggar!—give it to him, stick it into him!" cried the infuriated and brutal Tom, who knew

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right well that the whole world offered no means of driving the poor child into practising such an unnatural and hideous employment but that of the most unblushing and relentless violence.

"O Willie! Willie! I can't go up! Where are you, Willie?"

"Stick it into him! stick it into him!" cried Tom.

"I won't go up! I won't go up!" cried Totty, and then, after a frightful scream, which, for all Tom's efforts to hush it up, resounded throughout the house, a heavy footstep was heard on the kitchen-stairs.

"Holloa, sweep, what bothery are you kicking up here?"

"Oh, nothing, sir," cried Tom.

"No," said the man, reaching the kitchen, "but I say it's something. What have you got inside that chimney?"

"Nothing," said Tom, standing up before it.

"You be hanged!" said the master. "What have you got here?" and, pushing Tom aside, he tore down the soot-cloth. "What have you got up there?" calling up the chimney.

"O Willie! Willie! I can't get up! Oh, help me, Willie!" cried poor Totty. "Oh, they are murdering me, Willie! Willie!"

"What have you got up there? who is up there?" said the householder. "Come down, you young imp, there! What is it you mean?" and, seizing the leg of Fred, in another instant that little rascal stood before him, and in his hand a cobbler's brad-awl covered with blood, which trickled down his sleeve.

"What have you been doing up the chimney?"

"Nothing, sir," said Fred; "only teaching the boy to climb."

"Boy to climb, you young imp! Is that the way you teach boys to climb? Why, you have been sticking that awl into him. Here, my boy, what is the matter up there?"

"I can't climb it, sir. I can't get up it, sir," said Totty.

"Well, come down, my boy; you shan't be hurt. What is the matter? Come down here."

Totty needed no second invitation, and, in a few seconds, the poor little earl, with the blood trickling down his legs, stood on the trivet of the kitchen-fireplace.

"What do you mean by this?" said the man, turning round to the chimney-sweep Tom.

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"Mean—I means nothing," said Tom sulkily. "This is a new apprentice I have got here, and we must teach them to do their trade somehow or other. I goes to one house with a machine—to Lady Burmeister, of Beerlees Hall—and she won't have the machine; so machines is no use, though the Act of Parliament is passed to use them. Here is a new apprentice I have got. I must teach him somehow."

"Hang you and your new apprentice, too! You shan't teach him in my house. 'Tis enough to rouse the neighbourhood, putting up a little divel like that. Why, he can't be six years old by the look of him—and running this bradawl into his body. I have a good mind to run it into your carcase, you brute! 'Tis enough to turn a man's blood to see it. Come down here, my little man; they shall not hurt you in my house."

"Well, how be I to sweep your chimneys if I be not to teach my boy?"

"Teach your boy, be hanged! Here, this boy can sweep the chimney, I suppose; you don't want two at it, do you?"

"That boy does not belong to me: he is only lent to me to teach my boy."

"Don't you go to talk to me of teaching, if you are going to teach with a thing like this," said the warm-blooded householder, holding up the bradawl with the blood upon it. "I will have no teaching in my house. I will knock the blessed head off your shoulders in a quarter less than no time if I catch you using any such cruelty in my house. If you want to sweep my chimney, send this boy up who knows how to do it; and, as to teaching, you may teach this boy when and where you like—you shall not teach him here."

"Well, I'm blowed!" said Tom, "if we ain't come to a pretty pass. I wish all your chimneys and your houses, too, were all burnt down to the ground in a single night. You won't let a sweep work either with children or without them. What be we to do?"

"I don't care a straw what you do, only you shan't teach a child in my chimney. If this bigger child can do it, well and good; if not, bundle out of this house at once, neck and crop."

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"I can sweep the chimney, master," said Frederick, "and we can teach this young un at home."

"Very well; go up and do it then."

Thus relieved, poor Totty sat down, weeping and moaning his desperate fate upon the hearthstone, while Fred returned inside the chimney. Tom once more put up the soot-cloth, and in a few minutes Fred's brush was heard going up the chimney —the master of the house still seated in the kitchen—a sort of growling chorus going on between him and Tom, as if he was yet suspicious that some relentless cruelty was intended.

After a lapse of a few minutes, while Fred's brush became more and more faintly heard, until it died away in silence, a sudden shriek was heard in the room above.

"The house is on fire! The house is on fire! Oh, dear! Murder! murder! Oh, dear, he'll be burnt! The house is on fire!"

Tom and the master of the house immediately rushed out of the kitchen into a room above where a large fire was burning; and as they darted in they beheld the soot pouring down in flames into the fireplace, and, as it rapidly ignited, a terrific burst of fire shot out into the room, with a smoke so dense that they could scarcely see one another.

"Rake the fire out—put it out—bring me a pail of water—where is a roll of sulphur?" were the cries uttered one after another by the various parties assembled.

While, however, they were in full deliberation, a dull, rattling, rushing sound was heard in the chimney, and, in another second, down fell some living mass, which at that awful moment seemed indistinguishable, until uttering screech after screech, and throwing out here an arm and there a leg, it revealed to the horrified spectators that it was indeed a human being.

"'Tis Fred! 'tis Fred!" roared Tom. "The chimney has got a double fork. The soot has fallen down this chimney. Help me to drag him out. Quick, master, or he'll be burnt alive, as sure as I am a living sinner."

Without comprehending the adjuration thus addressed to him, the master of the house helped Tom to extricate from the bars of the glowing fire the burning and unhappy climbing-boy

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who had so lately been enjoying the fiendish delight of goading poor Totty up the chimney below.

It appears he had gone nearly to the top of the kitchen-chimney; and, being unaware that at the top the parlour-fire intruded into the same flue, he had swept down a heap of soot from the kitchen-chimney until it descended in a body into the parlour-fire; and there igniting with all the inflammability which soot possesses, the flames roared up the chimney until it caught him nearly at the top, where, scorching him with a resistless fury, the flames had penetrated his lungs and rendered him insensible. He came falling down a bruised, bleeding, helpless mass into the burning fire of the parlour-grate, the room above the kitchen from which he had started.

As they drew him out from his awful position, the skin all peeled off from his limbs just like the outer integument of a roasted apple; and when they laid him on the floor, it was quite evident he had only a few minutes to exist.

Anything more hideous than the sight the poor child thus presented—scorched and shrivelled to a cinder, the red, raw, inflamed surface appearing in patches through the skin discoloured by soot—it is impossible for the mind of man to conceive.

"Water, water, water!" cried Tom.

"Run for the doctor—run for the doctor!" roared the landlord.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" cried the woman lodger, who had been utterly unaware that the chimney was being swept, and in her surprise and agony unable to obey either of the injunctions of the two men.

In a few minutes the child was drenched with cold water amid screams of the most intense pain, and in the course of a quarter of an hour the doctor arrived.

"Have you got any cotton-wool in the house?" said the surgeon.

"No, sir," said the woman; "I don't know what it means."

"I fear 'tis all the same, nothing could avail for the poor little wretch. However, I will run down to the hospital myself, and have a stretcher sent for him, with some cotton-wool laid on it,

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I don't think anything can save his life; but we will do the best we can."

Away went the surgeon, and in a few minutes the stretcher with the cotton-wool arrived.

The poor boy was lifted up, though it seemed a great question whether, before he could reach the steps of the hospital,* his spirit would not wing its way to that all-merciful Creator in whose image he was created, and who has blessed England, as Englishmen so frequently boast, with greater and more abundant blessings than any other nation now on the face of the earth.

Is this the return you make for it, Britishers?

Answer me this question, Richard Cobden—answer me, John Bright and Arthur Roebuck—and thou, O newly manufactured baronet and placeman of Marylebone, Sir Benjamin Hall—thou who art reported to have said on the night of the debate, that it was not worthy of thy great condescension even to enter into the discussion of the bill intended to render impossible such fearful enormities as these—proved, on sworn evidence in the House of Lords, to be frequently recurring in your thrice-blessed country of Great Britain!

CHAPTER XXV.

When the unfortunate child was carried to the hospital, a crowd, of course, accompanied him, and, among the rest, the wife of the man who owned the house where this fearful tragedy occurred. Out of this crowd Mr. Tom Burman soon contrived to emancipate himself with Totty, and away they bundled as fast as they could lay their legs to the ground, leaving to his fate the unfortunate boy who had been "calcined."

Ah, reader! did you ever behold a child burnt to death? If so, will the longest life that man could possibly live suffice you to forget it? Never!

In the present case this poor little sweep, who had been edu-

* See Questions and Answers, House of Lords' Committee No. 948 and another case, numbered 950, in Appendix.

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eated in such brutality as to show all the cruelty he did to Totty, was, of course, only the victim of those who had thus reared him. As he was stretched out upon the hospital-bed, and the tinder that had been so recently called his clothes removed from him, the skin all came off with it. Shrivelled, shrunk, blackened—not a particle of hair left upon the sufferer's head—not a single hair left upon his eyebrows—his lips blistered and swollen—his cheeks crushed and blackened—nothing but the bright, bright eyes still moving, distended with pain, and the mouth uttering continual cries of agony, denoted that it was a human being, and not a large lump of charred timber.

"Woman! woman!" said the surgeon, as he continued applying cotton-wool and turpentine to his hapless patient, even at the very moment that a perfect conviction existed in his own mind of the inutility of all remedies. "Woman! woman! how will you ever forgive yourself for having let this poor child go up the chimney?"

"Lor', sir! I did not know that the two chimneys run into one another."

"But you have no business to let a child climb your chimney at all. Don't you know the law has forbidden it?"

"Lor', sir! dear me, what are we to do, sir? If it is against the law, the Government should stop the boys from going out, and the police should take care that they has machines. 'Tis not the fault of us poor folks, sir. If our betters don't think it worth their while to interfere, why should we?"

The surgeon was a Conservative, and he felt in a moment the unanswerable argument. To denounce her betters, and tell her that her betters were criminals ten times more culpable than herself, would have been radical and levelling. But, alas! reader, would it not have been true? If in aristocratic England there exists the slightest wish of degrading the better orders and classes of society, what greater handle can their enemies desire than the luxurious and cold-hearted selfishness that allows a whole class of children, chiefly taken from the poor, to be smothered and roasted alive, from the indifference of the upper classes, from the Government downwards, to carry out a humane law?

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All day and all night that poor child kept screaming and moaning on until death at last closed the scene of his sufferings. And what notice was taken of it? What was done to punish the householder, or to stop the career of the slave-owning Tom Burman?

NOTHING!

That afternoon Tom contrived to borrow enough money to get drunk, and this was his great consolation for what he called his "ill luck" in the morning. After making various inquiries about the trade in Birmingham, he discovered that there was a master chimney-sweeper very ill and in want of a foreman; and, taking Totty in his hand, he sought out this man's abode. This man's name was Joseph Rattary. They found him living in a garret, in a little miserable habitation near one of the railway bridges. Cinders and ashes and dust and soot were seen, with prevailing hue, in the ground and water and buildings and everything around. Going to the head of the stair, Tom knocked at the little door, that had once had a handle upon it, but was now without any fastening except a latch and a string.

After a preliminary pause outside, "Come in," said one of those bass voices which exhaustion sometimes reduces to a kind of grunting whisper.

Tom obeyed the summons and entered the room.

A heap of soot-bags in one corner, with a little straw scattered over it, formed the sick bed of the invalid, who now, however, was sitting up in a rickety old arm-chair before the fireplace.

"Is your name Joseph Rattary?" said Tom.

"I am the gentleman," said he. "Who are you, sir?"

"My name is Tom Burman. I have heard that you are got a little indisposed like, and wants some one to look after your business."

"Well, I am not altogether so comfortable in health as I could wish," said Joseph. "Just take a chair, will you?" pointing to a three-legged stool.

"How many boys do you keep?" said Tom.

"Well I have only got two at present. I had six once upon a time; but since my illness they have sneaked off, one in one

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direction, and another in the other. Them other masters, you see, they kidnaps 'em away from un, knowing I can't stir down stairs."

"Well, you want—" A pause in the conversation here followed, as if they both felt the awkwardness of coming to business, and were neither of them able to hit on any satisfactory mode of opening their budget, though, strange to say, neither of them seemed to notice the most awful stench which prevailed in the room.

"Did you think, sir," said Rattary, "of minding a gentleman's business?"

"Well, I thought as how if I could find a gentleman as would deal like a gentleman with me, I would not mind looking after his concerns a little."

"Pray, may I ask, sir, what you expects a week?"

Here another pause followed, during which time Burman kept twirling the rim of his hat round and round, now and then looking on the floor, and then looking in Rattary's face.

"Well, I thought," said Tom, after having turned it over and over, "I thought as you had got two boys as sweeps, and I p my little chap here in—he is not able to climb a chimney yet, because, you see, he is very young; he is scarcely five yet—I thought two pound a week would not be too much for a gentleman like myself, who would have to look to the whole business early and late, you see; for I suppose you can't go out none?"

"No, I can't get out none, sir," said Mr. Rattary; "but still I thinks two pound a week a sight of money to pay for minding my business."

"Well, sir, that is as you like; you knows what your boys bring you home now"

"The infernal young thieves, that's true enough; one day with another, fifteen shillings a week is all I can make them book up, though I knows they must be making a sight of money more than that."

"Why, there it is," said Tom; "you see them two boys of yourn—how old are they?"

"One is eleven, and the other is thirteen."

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"Are they very big?"

"No, not so very big."

"Well, them two boys of yourn ought to climb on an average six chimneys of a morning each, surely—that is eight shillings a day; there is two pound eight a week, to say nothing of Sundays. Well, then there is the soot they would make—that ought to be five shillings a week more; there is two pound thirteen. Then there is the twopences they get, that would make it ten shillings a week more—that is three pound three."

"Aye; but you must not count the twopences, as the old woman who gets our victuals looks to have that."

"Well, there is two pound thirteen a week, then."

"But ain't you going to count this young thief anything?" pointing to Totty. "I used to shindy up a chimney when I was not half as big as he is."

"Yes; but he is young, I tell you."

"What signifies age? It's bone, and muscle, and strength that does it, until they get too big."

"So I tell the young varmint; but he is so precious tender about the knees, he gets half way up and there he sticks."

"I wish I was his master for his sake. I'm blowed if he should not get to the top of the chimney or the bottom of the churchyard, one of the two, you young varmint! Why don't you 'arn your bread?" said old Rattary, looking at poor Totty with a malignant scowl, that seemed even to surpass in ferocity, if possible, the countenance of Burman.

"Ah! I often tells him what I feels—I be so tender-hearted—and what he would be in the hands of other masters; but he does not seem to believe it."

"Other masters? Why, you young thief! what is the use of your being alive, if you don't get your bread? Holloa, holloa, it's no use being burdened with him, if you can't make anything out of him. Give him to my boys; send him up before one of them. They would soon do it for him, while there is any life in him. Why, I would cut your liver out of you, you young thief! if you vos a boy of mine and would not climb. Do you think that anyone cares about young chimney-

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sweeps? Why we might kill a half hundred of you, and nobody ax a question who you are, what you are, or where you are gone to. You must make him climb, sir; you must make him climb. I can't have any idle boys eat my bread."

"For the matter of that," said Tom, with a hideous leer, "whether he climbs or no, 'tis very little of your bread, I suspect, that any of your boys eat."

"Well, then, that is nothing to the point. If they don't eat my bread, they get somebody else's; and if man or boy don't work, he don't deserve any bread at all—that is my maxim. And so, sir, to cut the matter short, if you choose to take thirty shillings per week and be my foreman, I am the gentleman as will engage you; or if you choose to farm my boys and give me twenty bob a week, I will take you that way; but if you won't take either way, why, you are not the gentleman that will suit me, sir—that's all about it."

Here, while Tom was considering how it was possible to do the invalid out of another shilling or two, it occurred to him to act the benevolent and feeling.

"You seem, Mr. Rattary, to be in very great pain."

"Yes, sir, I am, sir, in very great pain—very great pain indeed, though it's what most of us must expect. I'm afflicted sir, with our purfessional complaint."

"What!" said Tom, "have you got the sweep's cancer?"

"Yes, sir," said Rattary, "I am afflicted. I have had it operated on once, and awful pain it cost me. Now it's come back again worse than ever. Curse them doctors!—them never for no use except for taking money out of a poor man's pocket."

"Well, then, if you have got the sweep's cancer," said Tom, "it is a chance if you will ever be able to buckle to to business again."

"Well, well, I don't want to hear about that. What my chances be, my chances be. You am a regular Job's comforter, you be. This all comes of being so unfortunate in my youth as to be with a master sweep who did not have his sweeps regularly washed. It all comes from not washing boys. I hope, sir, you washes your little boy there."

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"Why, sir," said Tom, "I arn't done it yet; but I think I shall begin, sometime."

"And I suppose, sir, you doesn't wash yourself?"

"I arn't no time," said Tom, "for that nonsense."

"Nonsense!" said the other; "if you was afflicted as I is, you would not talk of the nonsense, I would tell you. I wash my boys once a fortnight regular. Also, as soon as I had a concern the first time, they used to wash once a-week; but 'tis such an awful thing in our business. It costs such a lot of soap, and such a precious deal of time and trouble, to get the soot out of the cracks of the skin; and it is of no use of washing if you don't do that. We all escapes it more than we ought to do. Lor', how many I have seen go with cancer! I have swept now for twenty years. I am eight and thirty next month, I am."

"Eight and thirty, sir!" said Tom. "Why, you looks more like sixty."

"Sixty be blowed! Why, next, I suppose, you will tell me I am as old as yourself."

"I," said Tom; "why I am only eight and twenty."

"Eight and twenty be blest! You will never see fifty again," said Rattary, with a laugh. The fact was, that both these men were prematurely old. Each saw the truth in the case of the other, but neither of them were able to see it themselves—a fault with most men in life, but especially with a chimney-sweeper, who often passes a month together without ever catching sight of a looking-glass.

"Well, do I look so old as that? I am blest if I should have thought it. I suppose 'tis the colour that does it."

"Ah! 'tis not the colour that does it," said Rattary; "'tis the hardships of our purfession. I don't know any purfessional gentleman which is so hardly used by the British public as we be. We gives our lives to the public in a calling that is both dangerous and onpleasant, sir. And they thinks no more gratitude is due to us for keeping them from being burnt in their beds than if the selfish beggars swept their own chimneys; and I wish they was all obliged to for one month throughout the year. They would then treat our purfession, sir, with more

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respect. But, as I was going to say, I have been engaged, sir, for twenty years; and, in that short time, I can count up among men and boys I have known, more than a dozen that I have seen carried off by this very affliction that you see doubling me up, sir."*

"Well," said Tom, "it is very bad, certainly; but, howsumdever, here we are in the boat, and we must go on. I suppose, if I takes this thirty bob a-week, I shall have the old woman of the house to wait upon me for the little I wants—I and my boy?"

"Oh, yes, certainly," said Mr. Rattary.

"Where am I to have my victuals?" said Tom.

"Oh, sir, I shan't object to treat you as a gentleman. You shall have your victuals in this very room."

As Mr. Rattary said this, Totty, rendered quite sick and faint with the insupportable stench, crept over to the window to draw a little fresh air through a broken pane.

One would have thought that, after the enticing fact just noticed, the favour of such a banqueting-hall would not have been very highly esteemed; but Tom, on the contrary, said, "Well, sir, I am quite satisfied with that; and where is my boy to sleep?"

"Of course in the cellar, with my boys."

"Well, sir, I am satisfied. When shall we commence work?"

"Well, sir, I likes to look after the morals of my boys; and, as they are clearly robbing me at present, you had better begin to-morrow morning. Come here, and sleep to-night; and to-morrow morning you may go out with them."

"Have you got any list of your customers?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Rattary. "Just look in that cracked teapot on the chimney, and you will find a bit of paper folded up, which contains the addresses of a few houses where I works. Just hand 'em down, and we'll look over 'em."

Tom, with rather a puzzled air, took the packet out of the cracked teapot, which consisted chiefly of tradesmen's printed

* See "Notes and Narratives of a City Mission," p. 38. "Scarcely a sweep known to me has escaped this dreadful disease. * * * I remember but one who has not been operated on—some many times, and several have died." See also Appendix.

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cards; some of them being the printed cards of the customers, others having the addresses of the customers written on their backs.

Tom handed them very deferentially to Mr. Rattary.

Mr. Rattary handed them very deferentially to Tom

Tom turned them over; but, in doing so, he unfortunately regarded some of them upside down, the fact being that neither Mr. Rattary nor Mr. Burman were able to read a single word of letter or print.

"Aye," said Tom, going through this dumb show, "that is very satisfactory." And, folding the cards up once more in the piece of paper, put them back on the mantel-shelf.

"Sir, I wish you good morning," said Tom, rising. "Is there anything I can do out of doors for you?"

"Nothing, sir, I thank you. If you will just bring me back a quarter of an ounce of 'bacco' from the chandler's shop, at threepence an ounce, you will obleege."

CHAPTER XXVI.

On that night, about nine o'clock, Tom having made a circuit of the town, idling and drinking at most of the public-houses, brought Totty back to sleep in his new quarters.

He was soon turned down into the cellar, with his usual nightly allowance of a dirty, dried, stale crust, with a drink of very muddy water; and having had a corner of the cellar pointed out to him on which to go to rest, there the little earl lay, as he had often laid, night after night, week after week, month after month, crying himself silently off to sleep, afraid by moaning to betray his grief, knowing that it would be rewarded with cruelty and blows. Alas! poor little Totty, the only human consolation left him was the solace of his tears, as he lay recalling with fond affection the day when the all-powerful Willie made him his darling and his pride, shielding him from every sorrow and oppression, and teaching everyone around him to bow with respect and admiration. How inscrutable to the

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mind of this poor little creature seemed this frightful change! how dreadful and dreary was the interval! how hopeless was the future! His governesses had taught Totty, many months before the mournful day of his being stolen, to say his little prayers; and every night—poor little victim!—in filth and darkness, in misery and sorrow, he knelt in his secluded corner of his cellar, whenever he was sure of being unobserved, and, holding his little hands to heaven, he intreated its interference and protection; and not unfrequently fell to sleep, as he did this very night, in this touching position, addressing his prayers to the only Being who had the power to help him.

In the course of half an hour, the child, awaking partially from the cramp produced by kneeling, laid himself down at full length upon the soot; and, in a few minutes afterwards, the other two boys, Richard Pratt and Robert Hughes, came tumbling down into the cellar, without a light, to take up their berth for the night, carefully closing the cellar-door after them.

Either forgetting that Totty was in the corner, or taking it for granted that he was fast asleep, these two worthies began discussing their prospects under their new master.

"I say, Hughes, my boy," said the eldest, "this chap—this foreman's coming, is he? What sort of a beggar does he seem?"

"Oh, he is a drunken beggar, at any rate; and I don't think much of him. We shall find him an awkward customer."

"Well, if he thinks he is going to do us out of all our other things, he will find himself mistaken. I shan't account to him for all."

"No. It is precious hard—isn't it?—after we have been our own masters here nigh two months, and sacking a load of tin every day, to have this here beggar popped over us. Oh, it won't do at all, no how."

"Yet he looks like a chap who would whack us heartily if he caught us on the cross with him—that he does, Master Pratt. I don't see how we are to manage him."

"Leave that to me, Hughes. I will tell you how we will manage him."

"How?"

"Let us get rid of him."

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"Aye, so the housekeeper said to the rat; but he is not so easily got rid of. You cannot set a dog to worry him."

"No; but we can do this, do you see. He will be sure to make us hand up all the money to him. After a day or two I would just let drop to old Rattary, some time when the foreman is not present, that we have given him a shilling or two more than he accounts for. Rattary won't stand that long—there will be a blow-up between them. Let you and I stick to our stuff, and you see if they don't have a quarrel and part."

"Well, that is a precious go; but I think it is a pity to get rid of him quite."

"Why?"

"Why, you see, he has brought that young boy with him that is sleeping here."

"Ah! I forgot him. Is he asleep?"

"Oh, sure to be: he has been down here an hour. Let us listen. What corner is he in?"

The two boys began listening for Totty's breathing; and then, guided by their sense of hearing, they crept on their hands and knees till they soon came up to the spot where the poor little earl was lying, an attentive listener to the conversation.

Totty, immediately finding that his security required him to counterfeit sleep, instinctively closed his eyes and drew his breath just in the gentle manner a sleeper would.

"Oh, he is fast," said Hughes; and they drew back to their original corner.

"Now, do you see, we can make this young beggar do a good deal of our work, and we can play the master instead; and let us take him, turn by turn, each morning. One morning he shall climb my chimneys, and another morning he shall climb yours."

"That is all very pretty; but the young beggar hasn't learned to climb yet, and I believe is not quite five."

"Never mind how old he is," said Pratt; "we will soon make him climb, or get him ready for the sod. We had to do it when we was not much older than him. Oh, he is big enough. We will try our hands at him to-morrow morning. I have got a good sharp awl. I will send him up the chimney, and I will soon walk it into him if he does not go up."

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"That is right. There is no reason why we should work at it if we can get a slavey."

"There, good night, my boy; mind you call me up as soon as it is daylight. We have a tough job before us to-morrow; and this foreman will be sure to work us pretty sharply at starting, just to let us know what we have got to expect."

The two confederates ceased talking, and in a few minutes they were both asleep. But poor Totty—did it tend much to close his eyes, or to soothe his slumbers, that wherever he came, or into whose hands soever he fell, all seemed, for the same demon-like purpose, to plot more and more against him? Scarcely had he been delivered from the merciless gripe of the poor boy who had been burned only the day before, when he was thrown in contact with these two little merciless wretches, who, although in the same awful misery, were only intent on sparing themselves at his expense.

On the following morning, soon after daylight, Master Tom, accompanied by Hughes and Pratt, and little Totty following in the rear, set out to sweep their chimneys.

"Holloa, boys, what rubbish is that you have got on your shoulders?" said Tom, when they had gained the street, pointing to a bundle of machine canes, with a most battered and damaged head-brush at the end of one of them. "You don't think I am going to allow you to sweep by machinery, do you?"

"No, sir," said Pratt: "we does not use this to sweep with. We only take it with us as a blind; because you see here, sir, in this town, sir, we is troubled with informers."

"Yes, sir," said Hughes, "and this morning where we goes we have got to sweep the chimneys of an old lady, a Mrs Fusden, and she has a great fancy not to have climbing-boys; so, wherever that is the case, just to humour them, we puts machine, buckled up as it is, into the back of the chimney, and then a boy goes up from the top of it."

"She always axes us before she pays us if we uses the machine; and then we tells her we have used the machine, and she thinks it's all right."

"What, does the old fool suppose, because the machine is

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buckled up and put into the chimney, that that can be of any use?"

"Well, she is an old fool, sir," said Hughes, "to say a word about it; but I believe she has got what she calls 'screwpuls of skonshens.'"

"Beggar her scruples! I should like to have the scrupling of her, the old varmint!"

The two boys laughed at this. "Which shall climb the chimneys, sir—your boy or us?"

"Oh, my little boy can't climb yet."

"Well, I suppose, sir, you would like us to teach him, would not you? Here's Pratt, sir, a capital hand at teaching. You put your boy up the chimney, and let Pratt go up after him: he will never let him come down alive till he has swept 'em."

"Ha! ha!" said Tom, "he is the customer I have been looking for, then. Do you hear that, you young rascal, Harry?"

Totty stood still, and began a most piteous roar.

"Stop your crying, you young thief! or I'll knock your head off your shoulders."

"I won't stop," said Totty, "and I won't climb;" and, taking to his heels, away he ran down the street screeching and holloing.

"Catch him, catch him!" said Tom; "he will be raising the police next, and then we shall have a pretty go."

In a few seconds poor Totty was caught fast, and with many imprecations, as Tom shook his fist in his face, was warned, if he did not hold his row, "he should be knocked into the middle of next week," the preliminary process of which was begun with a very sharp blow from a stick on the shoulder. This, however, only increased the screams; and Tom hearing the march of a policeman round the corner, was obliged to alter his tactics.

"Stop your crying, Harry, and I promise you you shan't have to climb to-day."

Poor Totty stopped in a minute; but finding how alarmed his master was at the cries, he was resolved not to forget that hint, but to keep them for the moment when most oppressed.

Peace being arranged upon these terms, the party proceeded

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once more to the dwelling of Mrs. Fusden; and the machine having been with all solemnity laid on the back of the grate, buckled up * in a single parcel, the boy Pratt mounted upon it and was soon lost in the chimney above, while Tom pinned up the soot-cloth; and then, having seen that one of his boys was at work, he took the other two into a house a few doors off, and set one to work to climb another chimney.

That afternoon Totty was kept busily employed and working very hard at sifting the soot and breeze; but at this work, disgusting as it was, the poor little fellow put out all his energy, because it did not fill him with that fright and alarm, or cause him that excessive pain, which going up a chimney occasioned.

After the soot was finished Tom consented that the other two boys might take Totty out to play with them, as they called it—in other words, to join a group of about a dozen other climbing-children, all engaged at pitch and toss for halfpence—the favourite process of street gambling, by which climbing-children are gradually initiated into the vices of their betters.

"You young un, you move off from us," said the two boys to poor Totty. "We've got no money of yours, you know. You won't climb, you know. You can't earn anything. You shan't play with us. Cut your stick. Go and stay over in that corner."

"Please, sir, I won't do any harm," said Totty.

"Harm, you young thief! We'll knock your head off if you talk about harm. You shan't play with us. You've got no money of your own, you know. You should learn to climb, and then you can get some pennies for yourself. Get along out of this, and stand in that corner till we have done playing."

Poor Totty said not a word. The tears streamed down his cheek to find himself rejected even by these little scum, and, in the only moments when he might have had any recreation, to be denied it by those of his own age: drawing aside and crying, in silence he watched the gambols of the other children.

Not far from him were a few other little boys playing in the gutter—children of the neighbouring householders, low, ragged little urchins, who could scarcely be supposed to have inferior in anything that bore the stamp of humanity.

* See Appendix, Q. 658, 659.

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Among other toys, they had a little apology for a foot-ball; and as one or two of them kicked this towards Totty, he, in the innocence of his heart, forgetting everything about his own appearance, kicked it back again and ran after it with childish glee, clapping his hands, and joining this group of little ragged urchins to share their sport.

"Get along with you, you little sweep-boy—you shan't come and play with us," said the biggest of these children, in a moment asserting their supremacy.

"Why shouldn't I play with you?" said Totty, not understanding him. "What harm can I do the ball?"

"Be off with you, you low, dirty little vagabond! Don't dare to talk to my children," cried a shrill, gaunt matron, rushing out of a neighbouring hovel, and laying a heavy cuff upon poor Totty's neck and shoulder, where the dark sooty skin was disclosed by a wide rent. "Get off with you, and play with your own little devils as sooty as yourself. I won't have any such low-born playmates with my children."

Low-born playmates! How little did she know she was addressing the Earl of Hopemore!—heir to the distinguished Marquis of Hardheart, one of the ornaments of the peerage, one of the props of the empire! Yet, alas! who can blame her? Is there any human mother that would for a moment endure that a chimney-sweeping child, a climbing-boy, should play with her offspring, if she could possibly help it? Is this not of necessity one of the very atrocities and cruelties that these selfish-hearted Britishers inflict, when they countenance this odious system? which substitutes a comparatively helpless infant for the perfect working of a simple piece of machinery. Alas! it is inevitable. Their very calling shuts them out from all companionship—from all tutorage—from all improvement, progress, or education. By the brutal, sordid selfishness of the Britishers, this class of little slaves is created to people a deeper deep than the very depths of degradation, and they are made to grow up in it all their lives by these English, who are perpetually prating of their love of liberty, their worship of religion, their refinement and spread of education!

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From the foregoing remarks, let us hope the reader will not draw the inference that we are an advocate of slavery in all or any of its vicissitudes. No, reader, we have no love for it; and as heartily as we espouse independence of character, do we despise the hypocritic sycophant who, with his sham philanthropy, would conceal his own guilt. We readily admit the many evils incident to the institution of slavery; we regret the perplexity it now places us in; we would some wise head devised a plan for its emancipation that could be carried into effect without endangering our social system. Nor do we come forward as apologists for the many evils incident to such a system, and which too often have their origin in the malpractices of foreigners and Northerners who seek fortunes in the South, but have neither sympathy with the slave nor respect for the interests of the State. Indeed, we have no apprehension that the candid reader will lay any such charge at our door; but we do come forward to protest against that hypocrisy lurking beneath ducal robes, ever ready to give out its sham philanthropy for the purpose of decrying the institutions of a country that should claim respect, and between which a comity of good feeling should be wedded in lasting bonds. But the exercise of modern hypocrisy has become a science, which those who can direct it best, find affording a specious unction for promoting their own interests, or concealing their own guilt; hence we abhor it in whatever function it may appear. And when we say we go further than the British House of Commons in our love of free discussion, we know our Southern friends, acting upon principle and discarding pretence, will join us; for you cannot call that which does not get a hearing for want of order and attention, free discussion. And in the British House of Commons, (that embodiment of professed power and independence, but which so often submits itself to be driven by the frowns of lords and threats of ministers!) it must be acknowledged that when measures of a philanthropic or *distasteful* character are brought forward, members have a very amiable process, a din of tongues, for the purpose of silencing the speaker, and a still more disreputable one of consigning the measure to oblivion by postponement.

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Not so in Congress; there, whether in the Senate or House of Representatives, respect is shown to the speaker, and his measure at least listened to. Again, we are beginning to believe that the merits of our institution are being better understood and less feared, and its interests promoted by the virtue of free discussion. Nay, so much do we love independence, that we are not quite sure but that the name of John Quincy Adams should be revered by the South for having, through his masterly perseverance, procured the rescinding of the twenty-first rule, by which act the bug-bear of discussion vanished, and questions stood upon their merits alone. What errors and grievances now remain in the system can be heard as well in the halls of Congress as in a Massachusetts House of Representatives. Our Summers, and our Sewards, and our Giddings, and our Chases—of the North, are heard with the same patience and respect claimed by our Butlers, Soulés, Berriens, or Stevens of the South: nor does the institution of slavery, as it now exists, lose any of its strength by the respect shown to free discussion. Upon these principles, then, do we strenuously hold that each country (we mean England and America) should direct its own internal policy and scrupulously avoid giving offence, either by direct action or through that indirect officiousness of which a young and powerful nation is ever jealous.

No country in the world is richer than England, none so boastful of its power, none more lavish of its displays, none where caste is so religiously maintained, none where rank is more unbending, none where heroes are so much worshipped, or where wealth can so easily cover heartlessness, none where religion is (protected by the strong arm of State) so cleverly turned into a means of gorgeous peculation. Even more! no country in the world presents the wreck of human misery and cringing servility of the one class, and haughty pride and extravagant display of the other, so forcibly as England; nor, let us hope, is there a country on the face of the globe, where every mite of its charity and philanthropy is so much needed at home. The streets of its great metropolis—a world of

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stately dwellings and dumb show palaces—swarm with hungry mendicants, who beset you at every corner; from Whitechapel to St. Giles', and from thence to Drury Lane, the Surrey side, or from Clerkenwell, the narrow lanes and by-courts reek with want, misery, and crime; from its police courts horrors and destitution disclose themselves enough to make the very blood chill to contemplate; a state of licentiousness not equalled in the world hovers about its richest precincts, and is tolerated and encouraged by her wealthy and powerful; and yet she is first to send abroad her mandate of sympathy for the American slave, her tribute of gold for the suffering, her voice of warning to the slave-owner. All these things, so pregnant of misery and want, the officious humanitarian, whose eyes see not at home, and whose heart has only drops of blood for those in bondage afar off, will tell you in the fulness of his religious soul, are the evil fruits of an old state of society, and an overcrowded population. Admit the argument, but does it grant the privilege of neglecting the remedy, or of going abroad to find evils in the body politic of a foreign nation when greater evils exist at home? Nay, it only the more forcibly discloses the artifices and pretences by which England would coldly neglect her own sufferers, while playing the humbug (if we may be permitted to use the vulgar phrase). Now, we honestly believe that among the middle classes of the English people there exists the very best of feeling toward America and American institutions; but, among the nobility and aristocracy there exists an inert hatred of America and American institutions, inasmuch as the democratic structure on which those institutions are supposed to exist gives out none of those virtues upon which they are dependent for their privileged existence. Was that gorgeous palace of the Sutherlands turned into an "Uncle Tom's Cabin," to serve aught but a pretence? Why did the fountain of England's sympathy for the American slave spring from ducal domain—that very domain, the ekings of three thousand labouring wretches, the most abject that can be found in Great Britain It was to serve a pretence! Go to the estates of the Suther lands—that field of ancient robbery—and there you will find

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blight in all its forms; serfdom most perfect, ignorance most complete, and misery in all its hideous blackness. No wretched mendicant can gain admittance into the palace of the Sutherlands, unless, indeed, he black his face, for my dear Duchess hath a love of colour most remarkable; no peasant of the Sutherlands can flourish beneath their rod of power; no commoner can bask in my dear Duchess' smiles, unless he be a philanthropist with eyes to see far beyond her own estates; no poor American can taste of her charity unless he have a black face. And yet she hath no soul for the ignorant peasants of her own plantation—would not let one of their defiling bodies rest a night under the roof of her "Uncle Tom's Palace"—nay, not even the vulgar breath of white wretch would she permit in contact with the kilted image guarding her door. When again England raises her voice of sympathy for the suffering slave, let it be from honest hearts, and moved by honest motives; let not Dukes and Duchesses, whose wealth and power have been drawn from the ekings of those whose hopes they have blasted, come forward to teach America lessons that would serve a better purpose were they but applied on their own domains. Let what may come from our own country; let Massachusetts and South Carolina wage their differences of opinions (good may come of them); but let us have no more hypocrisy of Dukes and Duchesses, for only doth it engender suspicion, complaint, and jealousy. If they, being the highest of the land, desire to serve the humblest, let them begin at home—let them sell a palace and give the proceeds to the poor!

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CHAPTER XXVII.

"HAVE you succeeded yet in making your boy climb?" said Rattary rather drily to his foreman, as these two worthies sat together one afternoon busy smoking their pipes over a pot of beer.

"No, I arn't," said Tom. "The young beggar is so precious squally, I find it difficult."

"You am a tender-hearted, nice young man to care about a squalling child. Why, I would have knocked the lights out of him long before this. *I* would have made him climb."

"Yes, this is werry elegant discourse, Mr. Rattary—werry much so, indeed. But, you see, I don't object to knocking the lights out of a child or two, if so be there is any necessity for it; but in this town, you see, there is such a plaguy lot of policemen, that, if they catches you in that 'ere delicate operation, 'tis what they call a 'case of scrag.' So long as the child only gets smothered or stuck fast, or burnt in the reg'lar course o' business, the police won't take no notice; but if they catches you putting your hand to it, it is very awkward."

"But still more awkward, Mr. Burman, to have a child in the house who is not earning anything."

"What is that to you?" said Tom; "he is not eating your bread."

"No, but he is sleeping in my cellar."

"Well, that is a precious go. Do you suppose he hurts the soot he is sleeping on, or does that take anything out of your pocket?"

"Well, I objects to idleness when a person is not afflicted as I am. My boys tells me that they gave you yesterday morning ten shillings, and you only handed me over eight shillings."

"Does they say so?"

"Yes, they does."

"They are infarnal young liars, then!—that is all about that, said Tom; "and when a chance comes, I'll hide them until they knows it."

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"Well, I can't help it, you know. I only tell you what the boys said."

"Oh, you can't help it. I only tell you what boys they are. They gave me eight shillings. Eight shillings I handed to you, and the shortest words in these matters is the best. If you are going to believe your boys before me, why, do. I don't care a blessed copper who you believes; but this I wishes you to understand, whenever you are tired of my services, you have only to say the word and I'm off. If I bring you eight shillings a day from your two boys, you may think yourself precious lucky: that is two pound eight a week, you know, besides what the soot sells for. As for my boy, I shall teach him to climb when and how I like; my boy is not your boy, you be so good as to understand that. I'm not going to get myself into a row with the police; and then, when I'm pulled up before the bench, be obliged to come out with the fact he arn't five year old yet. You know very well yourself the beaks don't like a child being made to climb so young. You must give him a little time at it. He will take to it in time. Your boys was telling me he looked very awkward when they wouldn't let him play at chuck-farthing. He will take to it. The pain in his knees won't be so hard when it comes to be paid for. I was thinking myself, that until I can bring him to it a bit, I will buy a boy here. Mr. Rattary, I suppose I may have him for the usual price?"

"Oh, yes, you can have a very good boy and smart climber for five shillings. Their mothers like a drop of gin or two to close the bargain."

"Well, five shillings is the price I have always given for them; and then, of course you understand, Mr. Rattary, if I buy a boy, what he makes is my own."

"Well, sir, I think you ought to give me a little commission upon him, as he stays in my house."

"What for?" said Tom; "for the rent of the cellar?"

"Well," said Rattary, "as he has the privilege of coming into the family of a gentleman."

"Oh, that is a precious privilege, certainly, that ought to be paid for," said Tom. "What would you like?—a pound a week?"

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"It is all very fine of you, Mr. Burman, to carry on your jeers; but if you had to pay the rent of a room yourself, and was at the head of a respectable family in our line, you would think it only reasonable that, if a member of that family 'arnt any money, you should have a share of it. Why should you have any money more than me?"

"'Cos I buys him," said Tom; "he is my property, and I have a right to all he 'arns."

"Very well, Mr. Burman; then I'll stand the money to buy him, then he will be my property, and I will have the money he 'arns."

"Very well," said Tom; "then, if that is the case, you had better get up and put your hat on, and go out and buy him."

"I think it very unkind of you, sir, to remind a gentleman of his affliction. You know I can't get out."

"Very well, then, I knows you can't buy him; but I can go out, and I can buy him, and, therefore, I shall have all he 'arns, as I said before."

"Well, you will give me a shilling a week, won't you, for him?"

"Well, I don't mind standing a shilling a week," said Tom, content to buy peace at so small a price, particularly as he intended that the boy should earn him at least twenty shillings a week; and this settled, Tom sallied out, made his inquiries, and that evening came back, leading by the hand a little lad as nearly the size of Totty as might be, and, like Totty, possessing fair hair and regular features.

"Where did you get him?" said Rattary, as he looked at the new comer.

"Well," said Tom, "I bought him of a woman at the end of the town, who said her husband wanted to part with him."

"Was he her son?"

"Well, never mind whose son he was. I know as much about it as you do. Harry Redmain's his name."

"Was not it a woman with one eye?"

"Yes," said Tom, "she had one eye."

"Did you observe whether she had a large scar down the back of her right hand and over the forefinger?"

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"Yes," said Tom, "I did."

"Yes," said Rattary, "that is the same woman. She axed me to buy him about six weeks back, and I tried to find out where she got him; but I wouldn't have anything to say to her, for I was told it was a case of kidnap, and I thought I might bring myself into trouble."

"Kidnap be hanged!" said Tom, frowning. "Who would take the trouble of kidnapping a child, when you might buy one for five shillings?"

"Well, you know some people don't like spending their money. Other folks, again, you know, have a sort of fun in kidnapping. 'Tis just like dogs, you know, getting hold of a fox, and the horses enjoying the sport of it. We am funny creatures, all we beasts be. For my part, I should rather prefer kidnapping to buying, if I could do it without being catched, instead of paying five shillings for him. I don't like paying money, I don't."

"Well," said Tom, "you seem very fond of it, at any rate, somehow or other, whatever way it comes to hand. But do you know whether this boy is a good climber?"

"Oh, yes, he is well enough in that way; but he is very small of his age."

"Yes, he is," said Tom; "I don't think he is bigger than my Harry. I looked at them together, and I couldn't see any difference; and yet, this boy, I'm told, is nine years old. Well, it is very funny the size of children. I have often seen a well-dressed boy out with his nurse, at four years old a bigger boy than many ragged children at nine or ten."

"I suppose it depends on the amount of butcher's meat they get hold of?"

"Yes, just as if you set a plant and I set a plant, and you gave yours plenty of manure and plenty of water, and I don't. Why, yours will get ahead of mine."

"Then where has this young boy of yours been brought up? for he seems to have been well cared for, as he has a precious big form of his own for his age, though he is very thin now."

Master Tom seemed very uneasy under this question, and fidgeted a little while it was being put. "He was reared in Lancashire, where I had him. How is your cancer now, Mr.

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Rattary?" said Tom, broaching a subject that he knew would be sure to change the conversation.

Rattary immediately went off into a general moan upon his affliction, and Tom speedily made an excuse for refilling his pipe, and walking down stairs.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

When Totty found for some cause or another an intermission was made in teaching him to climb chimneys, he felt it as a great relief; and as soon as Burman's new boy came home, if such a name could be given to the miserable hovel where they lived, with that instinctive observation which marks all children, he scanned the young stranger with an intuitive eye, and felt a great addition to his comfort in knowing that he should now have a companion, neither bigger nor stronger than himself, and whose gentle countenance seemed to indicate a far more agreeable little associate than he had yet known since the day he was stolen from his father's roof.

The summer was drawing to a close when the second purchase of Thomas Burman was made, and the hour was about five in the afternoon, when Tom, addressing Totty, said, "Take this youngster down into the cellar, and show him where he is to sleep with you to-night. You've got some broken victuals down there: get your suppers together."

"Very well, sir," said Totty, leading the way.

Then, as soon as he entered the cellar and shut the door, "What is your name?" said the little stranger.

"They call me Harry now; but I had another name once, though I have forgotten what it was. It was a long and a hard name. What is your name?"

"Why, my name is Harry, too," said the other.

"Is it?" said Totty. "Dear me! that is very funny. We shall be two Harrys together, then. I shall call you new Harry."

"Yes, you may call me new Harry, if you like. Where does your father live?"

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"I don't know where my father lives: I wish I did. All I know is, his name was Willie, and he had a great many servants, and I was so nicely dressed, and I had such kind nurses; and that wicked, wicked Tom came and took me away; and whenever I talk of Willie, he thrashes me so, I never dare to speak of him. Who is your father?"

"I don't know; I don't remember. I remember who my mother was. Her name was Sophy; and I think she died. But I remember having some kind people about me once, and being on board a ship with some very kind sailors; then I had some very nice clothes; but it is so long ago, I have forgotten a great deal. Had you any mother?"

"I don't know," said Totty; "I don't remember her," and tears began to roll down Totty's cheeks.

"Don't cry," said the other, "that won't help us; and you will only get whacked if they see you."

"I wish they would kill me," said Totty. "I should like to die a great way from all these dirty, dirty, horrid, wicked men. If I could only see Willie once more, I know he would take me away from them. Though I look at every one I meet, I never see any one at all like him; and I always pray God to let me die, or let me go to Willie."

"Well, don't cry any more. Some day you and I'll run away together."

"Will you?" said Totty. "Will you run away with me? Will you come to-night?"

"No," said Harry, "it won't do to run away in that way. We must watch our chance for it; because if we run away, and they catch us and bring us back again, we shall be whacked worse than ever. But if you wait until the right time comes, you may give them the slip, and not be found again."

"When can we manage it?" said Totty.

"Wait till we come to a town where there are some ships. Ships are such nice things to be in. I was always so happy when I was in ships; and we will run away, and get into some ships, and so get away from these dirty, horrid masters, altogether."

At this moment home came the other two boys, and coming

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down the cellar, "Now, you young vagabonds," said they, "you come out in the back yard. We are all going to have a wash this afternoon. While I and my pal take our things off, you two shall take the soap and scrubbing-brush and wash us down."

"Very well," said the new Harry, "I'm ready. Go out in the yard, and let us begin."

In a few moments all the poor boys were busily engaged in the occupation of washing, and this necessary but rare employment was accompanied by a considerable splashing of water and playing tricks. Totty thought it one of the most amusing parts of his unhappy calling that he had yet encountered.

When the two Harrys had washed Hughes and Pratt, they naturally asked the two latter to assist in washing them.

"You impudent young vagabonds!" said Hughes; "do you think we are going to wait upon you? It is for you to wait upon us. Think yourselves very lucky you have got the yard and the water. Turn to and wash one another, you two little beggars, you! We have got other fish to fry;" and, gathering up their garments, Pratt and Hughes took themselves off to their amusements, leaving the two Harrys to pursue their ablutions alone.

"Never mind," said new Harry; "I will wash you first, because you've never been washed yet, and you don't know how to do it; and then afterwards you shall wash me."

"Thank you," said Totty. "I will do the best I can, if you will show me how."

"Well, we will begin first with the head. Now shut your eyes, for fear of the soap." And to work new Harry went, giving Totty a very fair sample of his art in the lavatory process.

As soon as Totty's head was clear of soap, the other began with a scrubbing-brush on his neck and shoulders.

"Holloa!" said new Harry, "what have you got here upon your right shoulder? You've got three red stars, just like I used to see the sailors marked on board of ship."

"Yes," said Totty, "I've always had them. Willie told me he did it."

"Ah, I know how they are done. I often used to see the sailors doing it. They think it is lucky."

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"How is it done?" said Totty.

"Oh, it is very simple. You just take three needles and tie them altogether, and then you just prick the skin in whatever shape you want the mark; and take and rub in a little red paint that you buy at the oil-shops—vermilion they call it—rub it in with the blood; and next day, when they wash it off, the red has got in all under the skin, and it never comes out again. Some marks they make blue—that is done with gunpowder; but I like the red best: the red are the lucky marks."

"Oh," said Totty, "how funny!"

"I wish some one would mark me," said new Harry.

"Well, if you get the needles and the paint, I will mark you," said Totty. "You can show me how to do it."

"Very well," said the other, "I will. I should like to have these lucky stars; because they will remind me of the time when I was so happy in the ship."

"What did they call your ship?"

"A yot, I think, they used to call it—some short name, like wot, or yot, or some word like that."

"Come, you young vagabonds! make haste and finish your washing before the sun goes down," cried Tom Burman, poking his head out of the garret-window. Thus admonished, the two Harrys broke off their conversation, and plied themselves busily to the work before them; and, after an hour and an half soaping and scrubbing, they pronounced themselves washed. But as the poor children had no clean clothes to put on—nothing but their old rags into which to creep—the inevitable result was, that in half an hour afterwards they were nearly as dirty as ever they were in their lives.

The following day was Sunday.

After breakfast, Totty, going up to Tom, said, "Please, sir, may I and new Harry go to church?"

"Go to church!" repeated all the others, bursting into a laugh, in which even the new Harry joined.

"Why, you young haythen! what church do you suppose would ever admit you inside the doors with your soot? Go to church, indeed! You might as well ask to go to heaven as to go to church."

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"Never mind your church," said Master Pratt. "Come down with us in the back yard. We are going to play at marbles."

"That is more like it," grunted out Joseph Rattary. And, with a sad disappointment, Totty slipped out of the room, which Mr. Rattary's affliction rendered anything but pleasant; and while the children played at marbles, poor Totty, silent and despairing, sat down in a corner of the miserable dirty yard, in the sun; and in this mode of passing God's Sabbath this poor child was kept in company by upwards of 4000 other children every Sunday—Sunday after Sunday!

Listen to this, American Citizens! And when the British parsons and clergymen of the Established Church of England turn up the whites of their eyes with horror at American ministers of the Gospel supporting the Fugitive Slave Law, and the peculiar institutions of property in the Southern States, ask them why they make no effort to release these 4000 British slaves from this profanation of God's day in their own country?

Nothing is more common in England than to hear the clergy of the Church of England, and especially the bishops, talking, and preaching, and writing of church extension; but where are the clergymen of the Church of England who ever think of extending the blessings of their charity to those 4000 poor little English slaves, excluded from all churches by their dress, and that abominable calling which the bishops and the clergy of the Established Church of England, as a body, promote, continue, and extend, by having these climbing-boys in their own houses to sweep their chimneys, rather than take the trouble of insisting on machinery?

Among no class in England was "Uncle Tom" more popular or more praised than among the English clergy. Yet where is there an abuse depicted in "Uncle Tom" more crying than the broken Sabbaths of these poor 4000 English slaves?

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CHAPTER XXIX.

"I SAY, Harry, look here! I have got the needles and the paint to make my three lucky stars," said Harry Redmain. "Come in the back yard, and let us do it."

"Oh, yes," said Totty. "That will be such fun. But you are sure it won't hurt you?"

"As to the hurting, I don't much care about that. It is nothing, my boy, I warn you, compared to scraping your knees for months together up and down rough bricks and mortar, inside chimneys. You saw what my knees were when I was washing yesterday. You may suppose that is painful enough. But never mind that. Come out in the yard, and let us do these three stars."

In a few minutes the two children had sat down together in an unobserved corner, and Redmain, assisted by Totty—who pointed out the three spots—punctured the arm with a needle, and then rubbed in a little vermilion.

On the following day, when the blood was washed, the three red stars were distinctly visible. The two children compared them together; and, with the exception of Totty's being somewhat fainter than the other, they were on the same shoulder, and very much alike.

In the middle of that night, while the four children were asleep in the cellar, their slumbers were disturbed by Tom Burman rushing in, and calling up Hughes to run for the doctor; for that Joseph Rattary was dying.

With many grumblings as to the hardship of Rattary not being content to die in peace, like other people, Master Hughes trudged off; and in the course of half an hour returned with a member of the healing art.

As soon as Doctor Lamb saw the unfortunate patient, he shook his head, and, in a voice not intended to be heard by Rattary, he said, "He is faint now, and so he will continue —going out of one fainting-fit into another. In fact, the cancer has mastered the energies of life; and you will find he

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will go out of one fainting-fit into another, until one will come from which he will not recover."

"What can we do for him, sir?"

"Well, let him have as much brandy as he chooses to use and all the meat he can pay for, and, in fact, any indulgence he can get he may have. It will soon be over with him."

The dying man caught the word brandy, and repeated it, "Brandy!" Then, turning back his head, a little pallor, deeper than usual, overspread his countenance. He was gone.

"Dear me!" said the surgeon, "this must have been working him more severely than I imagined. 'Tis all over with him, I fear. Moisten his lips with a little brandy, if you have it!"

"Here's some gin, sir; but there's no brandy in the house."

"Oh, gin is the same thing. Was he accustomed to drink much?"

"Well, sir, he wasn't a bad hand at the gin-bottle, when he was in 'arnest."

The gin-bottle was produced, and a teaspoonful allowed to trickle slowly into the sweep's mouth, while lying on the wretched collection of soot and straw.

"Just open his shirt-front a little," said the surgeon.

Tom did so; and, as the struggling light of a dip fell upon the death-stricken frame, you might almost have imagined that you gazed upon a skeleton—so fearfully emaciated was the body. But the hair, the whiskers, and the beard having been allowed to grow uncut, the extreme emaciation of the invalid had not been traceable, wrapped up as usual in soot-cloths.

The surgeon held the pulse in his hands for a few seconds, but all was still.

The spirit made no impression upon the countenance of Rattary. His affliction and his life were alike ended.

The surgeon walked quietly down the stairs. Tom returned to his soot-bag in the opposite corner; the four children crept thoughtfully back to their cellar—and thus the soul of an immortal being left its earthly tenement for the awful presence of its Maker.

When Totty awoke next morning, to his great surprise, Pratt and Hughes had already risen. Giving himself that

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morning shake which was the only toilet of the generality of sweeps, he went out into the back yard to dash a little pump water over his face and hands, and presently he heard the garret-window open, and saw Tom Burman thrust his head out.

"Send Pratt and Hughes up to me, Harry."

"Please, sir, they are not in the cellar," said Totty.

"Where are they?"

"I don't know, sir."

"I thought they were with you. They have not come up here. How long have they left the cellar?"

"I don't know, sir. When I awoke just now, they were not there."

"Infernal thieves!" growled Tom, as he shut down the window, and came jumping down the stairs. Going to the front door, he found that it was on the latch; and, after making some inquiries as to the bag and brush which these two beauties had been accustomed to use, he found them both wanting. "Why, curse these fellows, what ungrateful thieves they be!" cried he as he stood alone, looking round the cellar; "to think that such cold-blooded young vagabonds could exist in the world! While their poor old master is lying dead in the house, and his breath scarcely gone out of his body, and before it is cold, hang me if these young beggars haven't cut and run, and bagged bag, brush, and shovel! Well, I am blessed if this here wicked world doesn't surprise an old buffer like me more and more, the more I live!"

"Do you think they won't come back, sir?" said young Harry, looking up somewhat amazed at the perplexity of his master.

"Come back! They'll come back none," said Tom. "What do you think took them off this morning so early without coming to me, if they intended to come back?" And then, after a minute's pause, "I shouldn't care so much if I had known enough of the customers to get their work; but these young varmints will go round and get the work, and I may as well whistle for it. It is as good as thirty bob a-week out of my way, and you grinning at it, you young beggar! though it was only last week I gave five bob for you. It is like my

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luck! If I gets a machine given me, some blessed old brute or another like Lady Burmeister won't let me use it! If I buys a boy, he is sure to get burnt in the first chimney we come to! And now, I no sooner goes journeyman than my master cuts his lucky, and his sweep-boy prigs his tools! What's to be done? Well, come along, let us see if we can get something for breakfast." Accordingly, all three sallied out, and new Harry went ahead, calling out "Sweep, sweep!" in the usual musical tone of what the late Mr. Rattary called their "purfession."

In the course of a couple of hours they had swept three chimneys.

By this time Tom and his boys had walked to the further end of Birmingham, on the Aston-road. The last chimney that he swept being in the village of Aston, he went into the public-house to get his breakfast.

When he came out and rejoined them, they once more walked the road towards Staffordshire. As they were going along, Tom stopped suddenly short, and, while striking his brush on a post on the road, he exclaimed, "Why the blazes should I return and bury that dead chimney-sweep?"

"I don't know, sir," replied young Harry, as if unable to fathom the metaphysical reasons why Mr. Tom should or should not return to bury the dead.

"His two boys have left him."

"Yes, sir," said Redmain, "no mistake about that."

"Then, if they didn't stay to bury him, why should I return to do it?"

"Well, I don't see why you should, sir."

"He never buried me."

As Tom said this with great emphasis, some gentleman who was passing along the side of the road caught sound of the words and replied, "And if he had, society would be no loser, my friend."

Tom thought that some joke had been aimed at him, but he didn't know what, and before he could reply the gentleman was out of hearing.

"I am blessed if I don't let him lie," said Tom; "so come

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along, my lads. I've often heard business is better in London than in the country; we will work our way up to London, and see what it is like."

The idea of starting for London seemed very refreshing to Redmain. As for Totty, though he was more immediately interested in the question, he knew no more about London than he did about New York, and was quite as indifferent to being domiciled in one as the other.

"How queer that old chap will feel there all alone! I wonder what will come to him," said Tom, pursuing his musings. "I shut the door and locked it when I came away, and hung the key in the cellar. They will never know he is dead until he stinks 'em out, or they go to him for rent. Stop, though. I say, young Harry, how much soot do you think there was in the cellar?"

"Oh, there was a good bit of soot there, sir.'

"How deep was it, do you know?"

"Well, them boys told me it was a foot deep."

"Let me see," said Tom; "I think I must go back for the soot—a foot deep. Well, the value of that will be no great matter when turned into shillings. Since his illness, I know Rattary has got in arrear with his landlord; he owed him more than that for rent. No, he is not worth burying. Come along, we will leave him to the parish. He will make a pretty bobbery before long;" and highly amused with this probable position of his late friend, Mr. Burman directed his steps, as he said, for London, the truth being, however, that he never had anything further from his heart than to take the children near London; but tired of the monotony of life in Birmingham, he resolved to set off just as he chanced work, rambling on from one town to another. In this way he continued to work, therefore, oft and on: these two poor children, one not five years of age and the other not ten, earning this fellow his bread by climbing up chimneys at the risk of the boys' life, and against the law; while this great, hulking, strong fellow lived in idleness on the fat of the land, getting something close upon two pounds per week on these poor little creatures' slavery, spending every night in a debauch, and never doing anything more industrious than

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bullying and tormenting the little infants, one of whom he had bought, and the other he had stolen.

Wandering on in this way, they soon found themselves once more in the county of Nottingham, when Tom received an order to sweep the chimneys of the Honourable and Reverend Philip Huish, magistrate for the county.

As the rectory of which this honourable and reverend gentleman was the incumbent stood some distance from the town, Tom had to get up early and trudge off with his children a distance of five miles, at three o'clock in the morning, in order to be on the premises to execute the work before breakfast. This he accordingly did.

Redmain went up the chimney and swept it; and as he was coming down again, some stranger entered the kitchen and said to Tom—

"Good morning."

"Good morning," said Tom.

"Does your little boy find that a good chimney to sweep?"

"Oh, yes, good enough," said Tom. "Why should not he?"

"I did not know whether it was straight," said the stranger.

At this moment the housekeeper entered. She was a staid, matronly person, and paid Tom the price agreed upon for sweeping the chimney.

"Please, marm, may we have a drop of beer?" said Tom.

"Certainly not," said the housekeeper; "you agreed to come here and sweep the chimney at a certain price, and there it is paid you, and you ought to be content."

"Oh, in course, marm, sartainly," said Tom, "quite content. A little drop of beer after walking so far will do a fellow no harm, any more than a crust of bread and cheese would hurt these poor children."

"Fellow," said the housekeeper, "if you want beer and bread and cheese, buy them for yourselves, and away she vanished."

"If you are going towards town again, I will walk with you," said the stranger.

"I am much obliged to you for your company," said Tom, eyeing him from top to toe, and wondering who in the name of

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fortune he might be. Then, after a short pause, "May I make so bold, sir, as to ax your business?"

"I have a little matter in hand, that is all," said the stranger.

"Do you belong to the family of the Honourable and Reverend Philip Huish?"

"No, sir, I don't," said the stranger.

"Why, how came you into the kitchen?"

"I was passing by at the time, and I just walked in."

"Did yer, though? Well, I thought I had locked the door."

"Did yer, though?" returned the stranger.

"Now, shall I tell you who I am and what I am?" said the latter, when they had got clear of the rectory-house.

"Well, that is just what I want you to do," said Tom.

"Well," said the stranger, "my name is Peter Hall, and I make it my business to do the little that in me lies to get the Act respected for putting down climbing-boys; and I intend—don't be alarmed, I'm not going to hurt you—I intend to take out a summons against the housekeeper there for allowing your boy to go up and down a chimney."

"Ha! ha! Oh, dear! oh, dear! You'll make me die a-laughing, you will, Peter Hall! I have heard o' you before; for ever since the Act passed—and now that is some time—they tell me you have been trying to get a conviction, and that you take the summonses out before every bench of magistrates in the kingdom, and there is not one that will listen to you. Oh, dear! oh, dear! what droll people one does meet in the world, to be sure!"

"Why droll, my friend?" said Peter.

"Why, what can be more droll than a chap like you going about spending your days and spending your money in trying to get the laws respected. Ha! ha! well, I never!"

"Why should not I get the laws respected?"

"Why, 'cos the magistrates, as is the only parties what can make the laws respected, don't wish to have the laws respected."

"Well, but they must, if I persevere."

"Must they? When you knows as much about magistrates as I do, Peter Hall, you will think differently. Why, now, here is this very chap, whose chimney I have been sweeping, he is a magistrate and a parson himself, and the son of one lord,

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and they tells me the brother of another lord; and have you the conscience, Peter Hall, to take out a summons against his housekeeper, and think that you will get a conviction?"

"Yes, I have. Why should not I? Did not I see your boy come down the very chimney, and did not I see the woman pay you for your boy going up the chimney and coming down it?"

"Lor', is that all? Do you think on that, now, you will get a conviction against that 'ere woman?"

"Well, if all I have seen will not get a conviction, whatever will?"

"Well, you see how the magistrates serve 'ee. that's all."

"Well, I will see. Why should not they give me a conviction? I do not say that Mr. Huish knows anything about it himself, though it is done in his house. He may be in bed and asleep; he may be up in London; he may be down in York. It does not follow that because his brother magistrates convict his housekeeper, that that should be any slur upon him."

"His brother magistrates convict his housekeeper! Lor'! Lor'! Lor'! Peter Hall, what a sanguinary man ye be!"

"I suppose you mean I am a sanguine man. Perhaps I may be a sanguine man, but, at any rate, I will have out a summons against Mrs. Housekeeper; I have found out her real name. Remember, I shall want you and your boys as witnesses."

"Oh, we will be witnesses for you, or anything else you like; but when you convict Mrs. Housekeeper, you may chop my head off. Now, mark if the magistrates will stand that; I knows 'em!"

"But how can they prevent it?'

"Oh, it is not for me to say how they'll do it. You will see they will dodge you somehow or other. I wonders a clever chap like you should waste your time by such stuff."

"Why, what better could I do?"

"Better go and buy four or five boys, to be sure, and make a couple of pound a week out of them, as I do out of this chap behind me. I only gave five shillings for un last week."

"Well, I tell you, that if I was starving, rotting, and my

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own life and all my family depended upon buying a little slave like that, and driving him up a chimney at the risk of his life, I would not do it, let alone doing it to make a profit by it; for I am in the trade myself, you know."

"How do you manage, then?"

"Why, I manage it a ten times better way. I get a good machine, which costs me eight-and-thirty shillings, and I will sweep any chimney in England, barring here and there a one—which I will undertake to alter for seven or ten shillings—I will sweep any chimney in England with my machine better than you will do it with the cleverest boy in the trade."

"Well," said Tom, "it may be so."

"Why, it must be so, if people would only give themselves the humanity to reflect. There, we have London, the largest city in the world, swept by machinery; and some of the buildings in London, you know, have very, very lofty chimneys—there is the Custom House, the Bank of England, St. Katherine's Docks, Ironmongers' Hall, St. George's Hospital, and a host of other public buildings. No man who reflects upon these facts can doubt that machinery is perfectly able to do all that can be required of it. It is ignorance, and selfishness, and prejudice, and nothing else, that keeps up the system. Shall I tell you why you prefer boys to machinery?"

"Yes."

"Because boys give you no trouble, except to ill-treat them; and if you use a machine, you have to use it yourself, and you know as well as I do, that it is hard work. It is easier to get drunk on the earnings of a child, you know, than it is to keep a respectable family on your own industry, (which I have done for twenty years,) and work with the machine."

"Ah, well, good morning."

"Good bye, but mind I shall serve you with a subpœna for yourself, and your boys. There, our roads part."

As Peter said this, the two children looked after him with a longing eye; and well they might, for he was a tall, honest-looking, cleanly, good-natured fellow. In a few minutes he turned back, and came once more up to Tom. Putting his hand in his pocket, he pulled out two biscuits. "Here, my boys,"

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said he to the children, "I put these in my pocket for my breakfast this morning; but I observed that old housekeeper gave you nothing to eat after your long drive, and I can bear fasting better than you can."

"Thank you, sir," said the boys, returning by a smile of sincerity none could doubt, the only act of kindness they had encountered from the hands of a human being for many a long day.

Even Tom could not help mentally contrasting the kindness of this man with his own conduct, and remaining mute from some mixed feeling of shame and compunction, while the other walked away.

CHAPTER XXX.

On the day appointed for the hearing of the summons, Peter Hall appeared before the magistrate. Tom Burman and his boys were there as witnesses, and the housekeeper was duly called before the court by name.

No housekeeper, however, appearing, Peter Hall proved the service of the summons by a policeman who put it into her hands, telling her for what she was summoned.

"I shan't come," said the housekeeper. "I am going to leave this place, and I am going off to another county, to another situation. I shan't attend the summons."

In vain, Peter urged upon the magistrates that the woman having been duly summoned, was bound by law to appear—as the housekeeper didn't choose to treat the bench with such respect as to appear before them, and defend herself, that the case ought to proceed, and the witnesses present be heard against her, and the decision given, as the French judges term it, "*par contumace*," though Peter did not use the French term. However, the magistrates would hear nothing of the sort. They decided not to proceed in the lady's absence, and Peter was left to his remedy. Such is the perfect administration of those British laws of which the English are so perpetually boasting.*

* Case before English magistrates, 1853.

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As they came out of court, Tom walked up to Peter. "I say, Peter, didn't I tell ye they wouldn't convict a magistrate's housekeeper? Ha! ha! ha! poor Peter! Ha! ha! It's no go! The law is all gammon in this 'ere country. 'Tis not the question of the law, but who does it. 'Tis not the question of the law in England, my boy, but who breaks it. Good morning, Peter. If you should change your line of work any time, and want to buy a climbing-boy or two, I can always let you have them at five shillings a head—cheap, and no mistake!"

Tom Burman walked down the street laughing, and enjoying his joke, while Peter stood at the door of the inn where the magistrates held their meetings, thinking what a happy thing it was for these climbing-boys that they lived under the "*protection*" of the British constitution.

With varying success, Tom continued to work his boys, now at one place, now at another—now at a country house, now at a country village; until at last, in the spring of the following year, Tom found himself in all his glory in a town where no one thinks for an instant of respecting the law against climbing-boys, and everyone feels perfectly licensed to trample it under foot to any extent—the well-known and fashionable town of Scarborough, the resort of the titled, the rich, and the luxurious.

A few days after Tom had arrived at this place, he went to one of the suburbs of the town at an early hour of the morning to sweep a boiler-flue. Having already had two children killed by this charming operation, Tom had grown a little cautious; and before allowing either of the children to go in, he went and opened the flue-door of the boiler, and put his hand in. Having incautiously touched one of the bars, he drew it back rather sharply.

"What is the matter?" said the foreman, who stood at his elbow.

"Why, those bars are so hot that they'll grill the children like a gridiron, if you don't put on some boards for them to lie upon."

"Oh," said the foreman, "is that all? We'll soon put some boards on. Here, Jim," calling to one of the men, "give a

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plank or two to shove into the furnace of this boiler, and lay over the bars of the bridge for the sweeps to lie on, and scrape out the soot."

In a few minutes the planks were put in; and Tom having lifted Redmain up in his arms, helped him into the flue, and saw him begin his work. He then turned round to smoke his pipe at his leisure, when down dropped his jaw as he beheld some one standing close to his elbow.

"Good morning," said a well-known voice.

Peter Hall stood beside him.

"Well, I didn't expect to see you here," said Tom.

"So I suppose," said Peter. "But I expected to see you here, for I heard last night you were coming. So, knowing how fond you are of your old acquaintance, I thought I couldn't help giving you the meeting, you know."

"Well, Mr. Hall, that is kind of you; but you might have waited until you were axed, as the old woman said; and as to my being fond of my old acquaintance, I suppose I am as fond of my acquaintance as other people are of theirs."

"Not quite," said Peter. "There was an old acquaintance of yours that died in a garret at Birmingham, you know, the other day."

"What do you mean?" said Tom.

"Well, I mean Joseph Rattary; you left him locked up dead, you know, in his garret."

"How the deuce did you know that?"

"Oh!" said Peter, "I make it my business to know all things a little at a time, but I know a little more about that affair than perhaps you know."

"What is that?" said Tom sulkily and crest-fallen, nevertheless with his curiosity sufficiently piqued.

"Why," said Peter, "when you left that man to rot in his garret, the stench that he made in the place soon made the other lodgers interfere. They went to the landlord. The landlord went to the parish; and when the parish authorities came in to bury him, they found under his heap of soot-bags and straw, as he laid in the corner, an old leather-bag containing a hundred sovereigns."

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"The deuce they did!" said Tom, dashing his brush on the ground; "that's just my luck."

"Ah!" said Peter, "I was in that house soon after I saw you last, and you can't think what a hearty laugh there was against you. If you had come back and seen to the burial of your old friend, you would most likely have sacked that money; whereas, after paying the landlord his rent, the workhouse got it."

"Well, I'm blowed if ever I saw anything like my luck in all my life!"

"Ah, your luck will be proved to-morrow," said Peter, "when I get a summons out against you for putting your boy in the boiler-flue. Good morning, Tom."

Peter was a good tall, stout fellow; but Tom looked at him, as he walked away, as if he had a mind to run after him and pitch into him, Tom looked so frightfully savage, and furious. However, he thought twice of what might come of that; and having waited until the boiler-flue was swept, they removed the boards.

"Just turn them boards over the other side," said a voice that sounded most unmusically in Tom's ears.

The men of the works did so, and all along the surface of the boards were the deep lines indented, burned by the hot iron bars on which they had been laid.

"That's a nice place to put a young child into, isn't it?" said Peter.

Peter Hall had just stepped back about the time he thought the boiler was finished, and saw this fact to complete his evidence, and then away he went.

On the following morning Tom Burman was served with Peter's summons, for allowing the child to go into the flue.

As they met in the magistrates' room, Peter got Burman aside.

"Well, Master Burman, do you think that I shall get hold of you this time? Last time, you know, I proved him coming out of a flue. If a magistrate don't convict this time, truth isn't truth. What do you say? Do you think you can get out of this, Tom?"

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"Get out of it! What have I to do with getting out of it? It is the magistrate's business to get me out of this. They will do the work better than I can."

"Well," said Peter, "if I don't convict you upon this, it is of no use talking of law any more. It's a farce."

"Well, Peter, you haven't lived to your time of life to find that out, have you? Ha! ha! ha! How you waste your money, to be sure!" And Tom went off laughing, leaving Peter shaking his head, quite incredulous as to the possibility of failing with such overwhelming evidence as he now possessed.

As Tom walked off, Harry Redmain lingered a little behind him, adjusting the burden of the soot on his back in the bag. As Redmain was jerking up his shoulders to get the bag in his proper place, Peter Hall's eye seemed caught by something which he saw. In fact, it was resting upon the three red stars.

"That is a singular mark," said he to Harry; "where did you get those marks on your shoulder?"

"What are you talking to my boy for?" shouted Burman, before Peter could get any reply, and turning back the moment he heard Hall's voice in conversation with one of his lads, not caring so much what the conversation might be, but quite certain that Peter Hall was not a safe man to intrust with any discussion with his poor little slaves; while Harry, the moment he heard Burman's voice, quickened his steps, well knowing that he might otherwise come in for a severe thrashing.

When Tom Burman and his two boys got home that afternoon to the house where they were lodging, they found a number of climbing-children in the neighbourhood; the evasion of the law being the rule, and its observance almost unknown, in the rich and populous town of Scarborough.

One of those boys slept in the cellar that night with the two Harrys, and they naturally, of course, began to question Totty as to who he was.

This was the first time that little Totty had come in contact with any child pursuing the calling of a sweep with the concurrence, and in the neighbourhood, of his father.

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"Does your father know that you are a sweep's boy?" said Totty.

"Oh, yes," said the boy; "and he won't let me leave it, though I hate it so. I wanted to learn to read and write, but he refused to let me do it, for fear I should give up chimney-sweeping for some other business."

"What is your father?" said Harry Redmain.

"He is a dissenting minister," said the boy; and, incredible as may appear to American ears such a fact of respectable, freedom-loving England, the child had only spoken the truth.*

Two days afterwards the hearing of Peter Hall's information came on against Tom Burman; and, with his two boys in close attendance, he appeared to make his defence, which was intrusted to an attorney's clerk.

Hall proved that Burman put the boy into the boiler-flue; that he remained there some time sweeping it, and then came out of it again.

Three magistrates were sitting on the bench; and when the case was proved for the prosecution, the attorney's clerk, on the part of Burman, objected that the word "flue" in the Act of Parliament could not possibly relate to the spot where the child was found, because it was the furnace of the boiler; and that any person of the most ordinary common-sense must have believed that the door of the fire-place, where the atmospheric air entered to carry off the smoke, was not the flue which must be taken from some imaginary point behind the boiler. As if the danger to the child, which the Act of Parliament intended to prevent, was not quite as great over the burning bars of the furnace as in any other part of the chimney.

In vain Peter Hall argued this point—in vain one of the magistrates gave in his adhesion to the common-sense view.

The second magistrate, who was a silent man, seemed resolved to prevent any conviction, and contented himself with saying, "I differ entirely from my brother magistrate, who thinks this is a flue. I think the decision ought to prevail that this is not a flue."

The casting vote for the decision of the bench now remained

* See Appendix, Note BB.

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entirely with the third magistrate. He was a tall, gaunt-looking being, fearfully marked with the small-pox—the lower part of his face enveloped in long, shaggy moustaches and a red bushy beard, which he had allowed to grow as if in dread of the sight of a razor—which still left his countenance as fiery as vermilion.

"I think," said he, "that this is an Act which requires to be interpreted most strictly against all informers. I have no idea of a pack of fellows going about the country interrupting the business of industrious people, by endeavouring to get informations and recover fines under penal Acts of Parliament. I shall insist upon the strictest possible construction of the Act in every such case where I sit upon a bench. As far as I am concerned, I decide that it is not a 'flue' within the meaning of the Act—that the boy was in the furnace of the boiler where the fire is burned, and not in the flue. I have always thought the Act a ridiculous Act, and I am always glad to see it upset."

During the time this magistrate was speaking, something seemed strangely to stir the breast of poor little Totty, who kept looking at him again and again. Then he would withdraw his eyes, and fall back into listlessness and dejection. Presently some intonation in the speaker's voice seemed to go down into his very soul, and once more the little child would open his large eyes and look earnestly towards the speaking magistrate; but the deep red marks of the small-pox, the large bushy hair and whiskers, defied all chance of recognition; and though the voice which issued from that uncouth countenance evidently possessed some deep working spell over Totty's heart, his little eyes in vain endeavoured to read a friend behind that mass of hair.

In consequence of the decision, Peter Hall's information was dismissed,* and Peter had the pleasure of handing out in court the sum of one pound twelve shillings expenses.

A general laugh followed at Peter's expense, and, as they reached the outside of the court-yard, Tom Burman began jeering him.

"I say, Peter, my boy, you will be regularly ruined at this

* See Appendix, Q. and A. 504.

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rate; as soon as you get into gaol just let me know, that I may get up a subscription for you."

"Ah!" said Peter, shaking his head, "I am not disheartened, though it is a hard thing to fight against lawless fellows like you, backed up by the magistrates who should put you down."

"Put me down, Peter! They knows a trick worth two of that! How do you think they would get on for boys for their own chimneys, if they allowed a travelling informer like you to put me down? They cares more about my little finger than they do about the whole of your body."

While this discussion was going on, the magistrates issued from another door, unobserved by Tom and Peter, but not unseen by little Totty.

It was the tall, gaunt magistrate, marked with the small-pox, with bushy hair and moustache, that riveted Totty's attention. A servant in livery, seated on horseback, held a second horse by the bridle; and the magistrate, with a whip in his hand, made his way towards the second horse.

The moment Totty saw him, an unusual lustre seemed to light up his eyes, and he stole quietly away up to the magistrate's side; and as the latter took the bridle from the groom, Totty, touching his ragged cap, said, "Please, sir, do save me from those horrid sweeps: they are making me climb chimneys against my will."

"What of that, you little fool? Where is the hardship of a boy like you climbing a few chimneys?" said the gaunt Dives; but scarcely looking at the little applicant as he spoke, the magistrate vaulted into his saddle and away he went.

Ah! who was this dispenser of justice?

—This man, bound by his vows to protect the poor and humble against the oppressor—who was this that rejected and spurned the little stolen Earl of Hopemore, when a single inquiry,—a few brief words, would have revealed the whole mystery of his theft, and restored him once more to society?

Poor Totty stood looking after him as he rode away.

It had cost him many a pang to summon his courage to make that simple appeal, and now, when he saw with what contempt it was disregarded, the tears trickled slowly down his

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cheek, and in this position Tom Burman came up to him and gave him a rude shake.

"What do you stand gaping there for, you little beggar? Run off before me there, and join Harry." Then turning to one of the bystanders, "Holloa, there goes my friend on horseback! I say, who was that magistrate? He was a trump, whoever he was."

"What, do you mean that tall man riding on the horse, with a groom behind him, with large bushy beard and whiskers?"

"The same."

"Oh, that fellow is the Marquis of Hardheart!"

Yes! indeed, it was no less. The father had spurned from his side his own child—that son to seek whom he now had agents out in every direction, and for whose recovery he would have given thousands in gold. Never having been able to trace his child into the business of a chimney-sweep, it never occurred to him that under the disguise of soot, and dirt, and filth, his own heir might be discovered; while the ravages of disease, and grief, and sorrow, together with the growth of his beard and moustache had so completely altered his own countenance that any recognition of him from his appearance by his son was impossible, though Nature did assert her supremacy in the child's heart, and memory was busy in his little brain when he once more heard the voice of that "Willie" on whom he perpetually was thinking in his day-dreams, whose name he was continually murmuring in his sleep, and on whom night and day in his sickness he had called without ceasing!

Ah, cruel and unfeeling peer! Had you allowed humanity the slightest voice in your counsels, you could not have spurned from your knee the poor little suppliant for that inquiry and justice which it was still more your duty to seek out an opportunity of rendering, than it was his desire to seek an opportunity of meeting! Upon your own head once more you have brought your own punishment. That very evening, while the marquis revelled in luxury and pride, how little did he dream that he was leaving his heir the inhabitant of something worse than a dung-heap, and the associate of the lowest of the low!

The marquis had been ordered to leave Deer-Glen for change

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of air; many months elapsed before he would consent to quit it. At last he summoned courage to seek out Scarborough. Shutting himself up from all acquaintance, he lived a life of very great retirement, at a furnished house which he had taken in the vicinity; and for some source of occupation he had gone into the town and taken the oath of qualification which enabled him to sit and act upon the bench of magistrates, being, as Lord Lieutenant, at the head of the commission of the peace for his own county; for it is the rule in England, when once a gentleman is in the commission of the peace for one county, he has only to qualify by taking a formal oath to act in the commission in any county wherever he may be residing.

To what purpose or how far he administered the law by taking his oath we have already seen.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE morning after the interview between the father and son, described in the last chapter, Burman met Peter Hall in the streets.

"Well, Peter, I suppose you leave Scarborough now you find the informing trade so bad, won't you?"

"Oh, no," said Peter. "I don't intend to leave Scarborough at all; I find that you are all using climbing-boys here, so I shall stay and dog you about till I find a case the magistrates can't resist."

"Well, what an obstinate beggar you are, Peter! I say, where does all your money come from?"

"London, to be sure," said Peter.

"Why, who have you got behind you there?"

"The Bank of England," said Peter.

"Oh!" said Tom, "you may have a good customer or two, and I have no doubt you have; but as to your having the Bank of England, 'Walker!'"

And Tom immediately turned his back on Peter and went home; settling with his landlord for his lodgings, he departed

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immediately from Scarborough, working away down towards Leeds.

"Curse that fellow Hall!" said Tom, as they walked out of the town next morning—"how I do wish all those informers was hanged in a string! I suppose now, at any rate, I have got rid of Peter Hall for some time; he will be watching those chaps in Scarborough. Harry Redmain, have they got many informers in the place where you come from?"

"No, sir; none."

"Whenever you says your prayers—if ever you does such a thing, Harry—mind you pray against all informers, and you pray for that there Marquis of Hardheart; for as long as there be such magistrates upon the bench, there will also be plenty of climbing-boys. You likes the trade of a climbing-boy, don't you, Harry?"

Harry made no answer.

"Well," said Tom, "of all the ungrateful fullows I ever heard or dreamt of, hang me if climbing-boys is not the worst!"

Leaving Tom in the enjoyment of his own unselfish sentiments, the two poor boys trudged on behind him in silence. In their usual style of working a little here, working a little there, in the course of a few days they arrived at Leeds, and took up their abode in the house of a chimney-sweeper of the name of Richard Humber; and in the cellar of that man Totty and Harry Redmain found, sleeping, a little sweep, ten years of age, of the name of George Wilson.

As usual, this poor little creature was made the sole support of the drunken brute, his master, who worked him almost to a skeleton, and, a day or two after Totty made his acquaintance, this child went out with his master to sweep some chimneys at a place called Hunslet Carr, near Leeds.

After they had been gone some hours, the master came running back to the house in great trepidation, calling out for Tom Burman, and, seeing Harry Redmain, said, "Harry, my boy, where is your master?"

"Well, sir, he's at the public—"

"Run and tell him to come to me—quick, my boy! George has stuck in one of the flues out there, and I do believe the poor

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stupid boy has been and gone and killed himself—suffocated, or some precious mess or other."

In a few minutes in came Mr. Burman, munching a piece of bread and cheese, and wiping the beer off his lips. "What is this, Humber? My Harry said you got a boy suffocated."

"Well, I fear it be so; just get a rope and come with me as fast as you can, and see whether we can't get him down. Will you let one of your boys come, and go up the chimney and see what is the matter with him?"

"Well, I don't know," said Tom; "who is to pay me for it?"

"Well," said Humber, "I suppose I must."

"I don't suppose it; I know you must, if you expects me to help you in the matter."

"Very well," said Humber, "I will give you five shillings if you get un out alive, and half-a-crown if you get un out dead. What provoking things these boys be! And would you believe it?—this stupid little fellow, I have sent him up nine chimneys this morning, and he has done 'em all safely, and he to go there and stick in the tenth."

"Well, he was stupid," said Tom, "after having had so much practice; but I suppose sweeping the nine chimneys had pretty nigh worn him out."

"Worn out," said Mr. Humber; "what's nine chimneys for a boy to sweep, and he ten years old at least? But come, don't waste any more time; but come along, or we shall have a cussed crowner's 'quest bother."

Thus summoned, Tom called up both his boys, and all four set off for the scene of operations—a series of brick-kilns and brick-fields, with cottages built upon the latter for labourers to live in. In one of the chimneys of these cottages Wilson, the fresh little victim of British humanity, was now stuck fast. He had been already nine times that morning subjected to this imminent peril of his life. Nine times! Think of that, American citizens! In England—the boasted land of perfect law—this land which reproaches America with the impotency of her judges and the prevalence of Lynch law—nine times this poor child of ten years, in violation of the law, had been made to ascend chimneys that morning in danger of his life, and now, in

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the tenth, he had stuck fast; and the only question was, whether he could be rescued alive!

"Is this the chimney where the boy is?" said Tom, as they approached the cottage.

"Yes," said Humber, "this is it; come along."

When they got into the hut, they found a number of the brick-making labourers standing, men and women, around the fire-place, calling and poking up the chimney with sticks, and one or two endeavouring to reach their arms up.

"Stand aside," said Tom, "and let us see what is to be done with this chap. Will you give us a candle, one of you?"

The candle was accordingly brought to Tom. who, standing on one of the bars of the grate, endeavoured to look up. At last he said, "I can't see him; I think the chimney has got a bend here."

"Yes," said one of the brickmakers, "the chimney goes up crooked; here it turns to the right, and then it goes to the right again."

"I wonder the boy has stuck fast; he has swept nine of them this morning all right enough. Here, Harry Redmain, you go up carefully, and just see if you can make out where he is."

Harry Redmain immediately stripped, and went up the chimney, where, after remaining some time, he came down and said, "He has got a-stuck somehow or other in the second turning."

"Did you try to pull him out?"

"Yes, sir, I tried, but I could not move him an inch."

"Did he kick at all with his legs?"

"No, sir, he didn't kick a bit with his legs; he is quite quiet."

"Did he say anything?"

"No, sir, he did not say anything."

"Did you speak to him?"

"Yes, I spoke to him."

"Did he give you any answer?"

"No, sir, he did not give me any answer."

"Oh, I am blowed, Humber, if it is not all dickey!" said Tom, in an under-voice to his brother sweep; then, speaking aloud

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to the workmen, "Will any of you gentlemen give us a hammer and cold chisel? We must take some of the bricks out."

"I have got a small crowbar," said one of the men.

"That will do," said Tom. "With a crowbar and ladder we must go up to the chimney on the outside, and open it at the second turning."

Going outside the building, and erecting the ladder so as to get at the awkward spot, Tom Burman ascended it, crowbar in hand, and, with a vigorous blow from the small end of the iron, began to cut out one of the bricks. After a few minutes' labour he succeeded.

"Now, then, put your hand in through that opening, and see if you can feel him."

Thus addressed, Tom Burman did as he was desired. "This flue is precious hot," said Tom, putting his naked arm in; and after a minute or two, "Here is his head," said Tom; then drawing back his hand, "Wilson, my boy—Wilson!"

No answer was returned.

"Wilson, my boy, cheer up your heart; we will soon get you out."

But, alas! poor Wilson's heart appeared either beyond cheering, or its animating spirit to have fled to that last refuge the cheering of which is not to be dimmed by the brutal indifference of legislators, or the culpable cupidity of the luxurious.

"Now, then, Tom, you have got an opening, you will soon get out some more bricks."

"Aye, aye," said Tom, "here goes;" and working away with the crowbar, one brick after another was loosened, and thrown to the ground.

While this operation was going on, all the crowd of brickmakers had left their employment, and stood gaping round, looking at the process of opening the chimney.

As the rent began to increase, first the poor little fellow's sooty head was seen, and, raised above it, his little skeleton arm, still grasping the fatal brush; then, by degrees, was seen the shoulders, and at last the knees.

"Ah! I thought so," cried Tom. "Here is the secret of it, you see; he has got his knees up an inch or two too high, and

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could not get them back again. Come up here, Humber, will you? and help me to lift him out of the flue. 'Tis no use on the same ladder; you must get a second ladder."

A second ladder was brought. Humber quickly ran up it, and between the two men the lifeless body of the poor little child was lifted out of the chimney; and as the genial breeze of morning scattered over the brick-field some particles of that impacted soot which had been so fatal to life, they descended the ladder, bearing the emaciated corpse between them, and laid it on the ground.*

"Run for some water, my boy, and dash it over him."

The water was brought and dashed freely over the wasted child; but the Merciful Father of mankind had gathered the injured little one to His own fold. Not all the efforts of the brutal task-masters could call back to that outraged prison-house of clay the emancipated spirit; never more was it to return to the degraded tenement. Never more was it to be subjected to the murderous treatment that Great Britain—the patriotic, the enlightened, the civilised, the free—is content to allot without an effort or a sigh to four thousand English souls, conscious that they are not only exposed to every torture in this world, but that they are of necessity, from their debased position, excluded from every particle of religious knowledge which ought to fit them for futurity.

CHAPTER XXXII.

As soon as it was evident that the boy's life was irretrievably lost, Tom Burman went up to Humber, and held out his hand.

Humber, who was in a very considerable stew as to his future position, put out his hand and shook hands with Tom.

"Oh, that's not it," said Tom: "I don't want to shake hands with 'ee—I want my half-crown. You know I was to have five shillings if I got un out alive, and two and sixpence if he was dead; he is dead enough, and I want to be off. This will be a case of crowner's 'quest law, I b'lieve."

* For the whole details of this atrocious case, see Appendix, Q. and A. 224.

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"You're a nice sort of a comforter, you are," said Humber "There's your half-crown," he added, placing the money in Tom's hand. The latter called to his two boys, and trudged back home.

That night Totty and Redmain had a long conversation over the frightful death they had witnessed. Both of them shed many tears, and, bewailing the miserable destiny which thus in anticipation they beheld before them, various plans were discussed between them to escape the awful slavery by which they were hemmed in; and they fell asleep, lying close to one another on the soot, discussing the plan of running away.

Two days afterwards, when the house came to be closed, Redmain was missing. Tom Burman, always apprehensive that his property would absent himself without his leave, called up poor Totty from the cellar to examine him as to his knowledge of his companion.

"Where did you see him last, you young hound, you?"

"When I saw him last, sir, he was playing pitch and toss with two or three other boys, just round the corner here, and he sent me home with the bag and brush."

"Did he say when he was coming home?"

"Yes, sir; he said he was coming home directly."

"Has he ever said anything to you about running away?"

Totty was silent.

"Speak, you young thief!"

Still Totty remained silent.

"Tell me directly," said Burman, catching hold of poor Totty's ear with such brutal violence that he drove his thumb-nail into the lower lobe of the ear, and made it bleed.*

"I will tell you, sir—I will tell you, sir," said the poor child, dancing with the pain.

"Tell me, then," said Burman, shaking the boy's head with the bleeding ear; "speak now before I let go."

"Yes, yes, he has, sir," said Totty.

"When?" said Tom Burman, still holding the child.

"The day the boy died in the chimney."

"And did you speak about it?"

* For this case, see Appendix, Q. and A. 223.

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"Yes, sir," said Totty, his candid and ingenuous nature disclosing his own share of the great enormity.

"You ungrateful young beggar, you, take that!" said Tom, letting go the ear, and giving a blow on the side of the head which felled Totty to the ground: turning round on his heel, he left him with this supper to go up stairs and carouse.

On the floor above, however, the amiable Mr. Burman, the *protégé* of magistrates and justices, the favoured of the most noble William Marquis of Hardheart, met with that dreaded functionary, a police-constable, who served him with a subpœna to attend the following day on the inquest to be holden on the remains of the poor little child Wilson. As soon as the police-constable had gone, Tom looked at the subpœna. Tearing it up with considerable energy, he cried, "Curse your law and lawyers, I say! If I attends the inquest, may I be hanged!"

Tom's baggage and camp were soon packed; and the following day at daybreak poor Totty, with the sides of his face encrusted with blood which flowed from his wounded ear and a large sore left by Burman's thumb-nail, was aroused from his slumbers, and told to follow Tom once more on his travels, with a heavy soot-bag, brush, and scraper. At the first village they came to on the road from Leeds to Manchester, Tom made the usual inquiries for work, and, finding little or nothing to do in the village, asked for the nearest gentlemen's seats; when learning that the residence of a well-known manufacturer of cloth, Mr. Richard Dearsley, lay at a short distance from the village, at the other end, thither Tom proceeded, and found that his services were required to sweep a flue connected with the kitchen-chimney.

Mr. Dearsley, it seems, having felt his house rather cold in the foregoing winter, had consulted with an eminent friend of his, the scientific James Skilsmyth, of Manchester, as to the best and most comprehensive mode of heating a large mansion by hot water. Dearsley and Skilsmyth were old and intimate companions, both of them were scientific men, and it was a mere pleasurable pursuit of science to both of them to try and devise something which should be an improvement upon all previous systems. Accordingly, they had planned a most

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ingenious apparatus, which consisted of a very large copper boiler behind the kitchen-fireplace, connected by pipes with small steam-tight copper cisterns, in all the principal rooms and halls of the house. The water was self-supplying by a ball and tap; and when the kitchen-fire was lighted, the large mass of water becoming heated, it mounted first from one room to another, traversed the whole of the house, and finally heated an iron cistern on the top storey, by which to supply hot water to all the rooms and three or four baths, the laundry, and other offices.

Skilsmyth was a distinguished Scotchman—the son and the brother of men eminent for their ability in science and art. Skilsmyth's elder brother had lived chiefly in London, where he died at an early age; but before death deprived the world of the exquisite productions of his pencil, they had attained a fame which placed them in the galleries of all the most celebrated collectors, and produced him a splendid price for each. Skilsmyth's father was also a painter, and in Scotland stood at the very head of his profession. James Skilsmyth had originally been intended for a painter, too; and had he pursued the original intention, would no doubt have earned a position scarcely inferior to that of his brother. But the father, who was a remarkably clever and sagacious man, fearful that two of the family in the practice of the same art might be in one another's light, gave his son a double profession, and educated him both as a painter and as a working engineer, making him begin from the very foundation of the art, and teaching him even as a boy to excel in everything that was ingenious and mechanical. Many a time the old gentleman's eyes glistened with delight as he sat in his dining-room after dinner with a few friends, while he said, "Jemmy, lad, show us your locomotive which you made the other day." Then Jemmy, a boy of eighteen, as pleased as possible, would leave the room and soon return with a small miniature locomotive, every particle of which he had made and put together with his own fingers, and which he had built with a fifth or guiding wheel that answered the purpose of a rudder, and which being set at a certain angle was fixed in that position. Jemmy then immediately got a small

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heater, introduced it into his locomotive in the place of a fire, and as soon as the steam got up the pistons of the locomotive gradually came into play, and off went his beautiful toy, coursing in a complete circle round and round the chairs of the guests, to the admiration of all present.

That talent evinced at so early an age brightly expanded with every passing year, until at opening manhood James Skilsmyth achieved a reputation that from the centre of Manchester extended wider and wider, until it has made his name famous throughout all the world, wherever the engineering genius of Great Britain has become known.

As Skilsmyth was constantly in the habit of spending a few days near Leeds with his friend Dearsley, they had agreed that their model apparatus should not be set up in the house of the latter until Skilsmyth could spend a few days with him; and after many delays from the pressing nature of his business, he contrived at length to make out his promised visit, and the smiths had been ordered to come and put up the apparatus under the personal inspection of himself and Dearsley, and the last fittings were being completed on the morning when Tom Burman went to ask for work.

"You have just come in time," said one of the workmen. "A sweep was to have come over to sweep this flue before we fire the new apparatus, and he has disappointed us; come in and set to work as fast as you like."

Thus invited, in went Master Tom, pinned up his soot-cloth, and gave evident signs of presently sweeping the chimney.

While he was thus employed, poor Totty looked on in wonder and in fear, marvelling whether Burman would attempt to climb the chimney with his own bulky person, and fearing that he was once more to be subjected to all the torture that had invariably accompanied the attempt to make him accomplish this painful and disgusting task.

Tom pothered about his brush till he saw the workmen leave the kitchen; then turning sharply round to poor Totty, seized him in a moment in his arms, whipped him behind the soot-cloth, and, shaking his fist at him, put the sweeping-brush into

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the child's hand: he then drew the soot-cap over Totty's eyes before he could squall out, and then said in a low voice, "Now, you infernal little imp, you! go up and clean this chimney in a quarter less than no time; and if you squall or cry out, and do not immediately climb up it, and do your work properly, remember I will take you home to a chimney in the first lodgings we get, and I will have the life out of you!"

Thus frightened, poor Totty, not daring to say a word, took the brush in his little hands, and endeavoured, as he had seen the other boys do it, to put his knees against one side of the chimney and his back against the other, and climb up.

Tom watched till he saw him beginning to make the attempt, and then withdrew outside the soot-cloth. In a few moments Totty's brush was heard knocking about in the chimney, and then it stopped.

Tom, by way of giving him a fearful hint, rapped angrily with his knuckles outside the flue.

Still nothing was heard within.

He waited a few moments more. and then rapped several times again.

Still Totty gave no sign.

The workmen, by this time returned again to the kitchen, were busy with their apparatus. Taking advantage of the noise of their hammers, Tom put his head inside the soot-cloth; and looking up the chimney, there he beheld poor Totty just resting a few yards from the bars of the grate, crying at his inability to climb, the pain occasioned by his knees already bleeding, and the desperate fear he was under of the sweep's violence.

"Oh, there you are, you young beggar! You get up the chimney directly."

"I can't, sir," said Totty, in a voice half-smothered by the cap which was drawn over the child's face.

"Can't you, you young warmint! I'll soon make you," said Tom. Drawing a sharp awl out of his pocket, he reached himself up the chimney, and thrust it into poor Totty's thigh.

"Oh! Oh, mercy, mercy! spare me, sir, spare me!" cried Totty.

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"Get up, then," cried Tom; "get up the chimney, you young blackguard, or I'll have the life of you!"

Thus adjured, and urged by the pain, once more the poor little infant began climbing up the hideous passage, but, from want ot strength and practice, slipping back every now and then in a single second as many inches as it had before taken minutes to accomplish.

Satisfied that the child was making an effort, Tom once more withdrew his head from behind the soot-cloth, and again waited. For a few minutes the brush was once more heard rattling about, and then it stopped. Again Tom knocked. Again Totty's brush was heard, but the poor child, unable to get up, was evidently causing a noise more to delude Tom into the belief that he was climbing than for any other purpose, as it was clear that the sound did not ascend the chimney.

Suppressing an oath, Tom once more drew the sharp bradawl out of his pocket, leaned into the chimney, and thrust it with all his might again into Totty's thigh.

"Oh! oh! oh!" screamed the child, as he received this wound. The pain overcoming all prudence, he relaxed his hold upon the chimney side, and down he came tumbling upon the head of Burman as he leaned into the chimney.

At the same instant a powerful grasp was laid upon Burman's collar. He was swung out of the fireplace, and hurled upon the floor of the kitchen right upon his back.

"You infernal villain, what are you about?" cried the incensed voice of James Skilsmyth, who, on his way from his early morning's walk to the breakfast-table, thought he would just step into the kitchen to see how the workmen proceeded with the apparatus. He had scarcely entered, when his quick eye caught sight of Burman, with an angry and vindictive countenance, drawing the glittering awl out of his pocket, and then dashing up the chimney with it.

The cry that followed, and the poor child tumbling down on Tom's head, knocking down the soot-cloth, at once told Skilsmyth the cruelty that had been practised.

"What is this you mean, sweeping a chimney without machinery, and practising this infernal cruelty?"

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"Cruelty!" said Tom, rubbing his back and his head. "Who are you, I should like to know, that dare to 'salt me in this way? I ben't practising any cruelty. I suppose I must teach my 'prentice his 'purfession;' and this wicked young warmint will eat my bread, and won't do a day's work. I am only teaching him to climb, and no boy can be taught to climb without using a little rough means now and then."

"To climb, you infernal scoundrel!" said Skilsmyth; "don't you know that you have no right to teach any child to climb, and that it is a violation of the law of the land? Suppose I were to set the laws at defiance, should not I take up the poker from the hearth there and beat in your infernal skull and scatter your 'harns'* upon the hearth?"

"Two can play at that fun, Mr. Skilsmyth," said Tom, who, from long residence in Manchester, well knew the person of Skilsmyth, though Skilsmyth did not know him. "And if you come to talk to me about law, go and ask the magistrates who have their chimneys swept every day by children, and laugh at the law. Where is the harm of a poor man like me getting his bread with a boy? Go and ask the magistrates; they will tell you, you cannot sweep chimneys with machinery."

"And I tell you that any magistrate who says so is an ignorant old fool if he is in earnest, and a lying, good-for-nothing knave if he is not. A pretty thing to tell an engineer in these days, when steam can walk the world from one end to the other in a few hours, and America is brought within ten days of England by nothing else but by the aid of machinery, that a common trumpery kitchen-flue cannot be cleansed of a little soot without sending a living creature up it at the risk of his life! The boy is quite right not to learn to climb, and you have no business to teach him; and if you have not got a machine to sweep the chimney, get away out of the house directly and go and get one."

Tom required no second invitation.

"Very well, sir, I'll go and get a machine, if you will have one." And Tom, taking down his soot-cloth, put his brush, and scraper, and bag on his back; then taking by the hand Totty,

* Anglice, "brains."

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who in fright and terror subdued the agony that he still felt, away they both went together.

As soon as they were clear of the house, Tom, who uttered not a word to poor Totty, made his way into the village, hired a lodging in a low miserable hovel, took possession of the room, and locking Totty up in it, without speaking a syllable went out, begged a small whisp of straw from the stable of the neighbouring public-house, and, picking up a few sticks in the yard, returned with these materials, once more locked the door, put the straw in the grate and the sticks upon them, and then, with a voice husky with suppressed rage, turned round to Totty.

"Now, you young beggar! there is no one in this house remember to interfere betwixt you and me. Do you see those sticks and that straw? Don't begin to cry; it is no use here, nobody can hear you. I am going to put you up that chimney; I will give you the brush, and if you don't climb to the top of it so that I can hear your brush knocking about in the pot, I'll set fire to that straw and that wood, and you shall never come out of that chimney alive—"

—"Oh, spare me—spare me! I can't climb, sir! I don't know how."

"Don't you know how, you young brute—I'll teach you;" and Tom gave him a cuff on the side of the cheek which knocked him down on the floor; then, while he was still screaming with pain, he lifted him in his arms, thrust him into the chimney, and, putting a brush in his hand, said, "Will you climb, or shall I burn you alive, you young beggar? Do you think I am going to keep you and let you perpetually get me into one scrape or another?—do you think I am going to let you starve me alive, and you too lazy to do your work?"

"I can't climb, sir, I don't know how. Oh, spare me, sir—do spare me!"—

—"Spare you, you young brute! Why can't you climb, I should like to know? Other boys can climb who are no bigger than you. Why, you are as tall now as young Harry that run away. Why should not you climb? You don't try to do it. Try it, you young beggar, try for your life."

"Let me down, sir—let me down!"

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"I won't let you down; you go up that chimney directly, or I'll set fire to the straw." As Tom said this, he drew a lucifer-box out of his pocket and ignited one of the matches. "Now, then, up you go, or I'll set fire to it, and roast you alive! I only give you three. One, two, three, and I'll set fire to it. Now, then—one!"

"Oh, sir, I'll go—I'll go, sir!" screamed Totty, and, frantic with fear, the poor little fellow put his back against one side, his knees against the other, all bleeding as they were from their attempt in the last chimney; but still as he went up a few inches the pain at his knees was so great he could not bear to keep his hold upon the bricks, and, shrinking back from them, his body slipped down the chimney time after time.

"I'll teach you to sham, you young brute! in that way; stick to it."

"I can't help it, sir—I can't help it—"

—"Then die, and be ——!" said Burman, with a ferocious impatience lighting another match and setting fire to the straw.

In an instant a vivid flame darted forth and scorched the poor child's exposed skin. In the deepest agony of that fearful moment, he once more made effort after effort to spring up the chimney.

"Up you go, you young beggar! life or death with you, up you go!"

"Murder, murder! help, help! O Willie! Willie! where are you, Willie?" screamed poor Totty, with all the power of his little lungs.

Happily for him, although the straw had caught fire and had fired the wood, the chimney, from not having been used for some time, was acted upon by what is technically termed a "down draught;" the flames, it is true, scorched the child's person when in immediate contact with them, yet when he rose a little, although his person very much obstructed the downward current of the air, still enough rushed past him into the wretched room below to puff the smoke, and a considerable portion of the flame, into the apartment.

A very few seconds, however, would have warmed the chim-

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ney, and produced a counter-current fatal to poor Totty's existence, but at this moment a loud rapping was heard at the door of the apartment.

"Open the door directly, here, to the police."

At the sound of that dreadful name, Tom hastily seized Totty's foot, dragged him down the chimney, and as his dress was all in flames, springing through the doorway communicating with the yard, Tom plunged him into a large water-butt that stood there, exclaiming to him, as he did so, "Hold your cries, you young beggar, or I'll drown you!"

Then dragging him out of this cold bath, the shock of which had completely paralysed his cries, Tom threw Totty down in a corner, tore the burning straw and wood out of the grate, and trampled it among the refuse cinders left by the last tenant, sprang to the window, put it wide open, left the door leading into the yard in the same condition, and, having taken these precautions, went and put his back against the door so as to prevent its being forced open.

"Who is outside there? what do you want?"

"I want to come in."

'Who are you, and what do you want to come in for?"

"I am come to take into custody a chimney-sweeper for an assault upon a boy at Mr. Dearsley's hall; I am a police-constable."

"Very well," said Tom, "wait a moment or two, and I'll undo the door; the key has got hampered in the lock;" and Tom pretended to unlock it, without making any effort to do so, but, to play with the policeman until the smoke of the straw could be got rid of, Tom kept turning the lock backwards and forwards. "Drat the lock, the wards is rusty; the key is broke. Stay—now, that's it; drat the lock; curse the stupid door! Is it open now, policeman? Try it."

Well enough Tom knew that it was not open, but the policeman, little imagining what had been going on inside, and only content that the party sought should not escape, made no effort to break in, but simply gave the lock another shake.

"No; it is fast still."

"Wait a moment, then; I will try it again."

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After thus pretending to turn it backwards and forwards, and double-locking it, then half-unlocking it, then double-locking it again, shaking the door, and cursing pretty roundly, Tom succeeded in keeping up this farce until the room was clear of smoke. At last the policeman's suspicions beginning to be aroused, he put his shoulder to the door, and gave a sudden lunge; part of the lock flew from its fastenings, and in entered the constable, with the landlord of the house.

"Hilloa, what game are you going on here with this poor boy?" said the policeman, looking at Totty, who was sobbing and crying as though his heart would break, in the corner where he had been thrown.

"No game at all, sir," said Tom very sullenly. "He is a werry wicious, ungrateful child as ever was; he won't l'arn to climb, though I have taken a great deal of pains and kindness to teach him. He is werry troublesome, werry."

"Yes, and I suspect he will give you some more trouble before you and he parts acquaintance. What have you been doing with him?"

"Nothing, sir; only persuading him to try and learn his business in sweeping this chimney."

"Well, now you stand aside there, and remember you are my prisoner, and if I see you attempt to escape it will be worse for you," said the policeman, drawing out his truncheon. "Here, boy, get up and come here. What is the matter? what are you crying about?"

"Oh, I'm so burnt, sir."

"Burnt! where are you burnt, my boy?"

"All about my legs, sir," said Totty.

"What has burnt you?"

"Nothing, the little lying, wicious, ungrateful rascal!"

"You had better hold your tongue, prisoner," said the policeman; "you'll only get yourself into a scrape. What has burnt you, my boy?"

"Tom has burnt me, sir," said Totty.

"Where has he burnt you?"

"He put me up that chimney, sir, to make me climb—said he would kill me because I was no use to him, and lit the fire

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under me. Then he pulled me down, and put me in the butt full of water in the yard."

"Well, did I ever! Such a little windictive, ungrateful liar!" said Tom, lifting up his hands and turning up the whites of his eyes. "Strike me dead if ever I heard anything like it!"

Fortunately for Master Tom, the policeman was a raw country recruit, who had only just entered the force, and it did not occur to him, as it ought to have done, to examine the chimney and feel the flue, and search for any loose pieces of wood that might be half charred and still warm.

"This is a serious charge," said he. "Here, boy, can you walk?"

"Yes, sir, I think I can walk," said Totty.

"Then you follow us to the magistrates. And you, young man," laying his hand on Tom's shoulder, "you are my prisoner; come along with me."

The moment Tom was taken into custody, a very virtuous impulse seemed to possess the mind of every one present; and, with shouts of execration, they followed in the rear of Tom and the policeman to see what would come of it.

On the way poor Totty dropped down in the road, from the pain of his burns, and one stout fellow in the crowd took him in his arms and carried him on to the house of the magistrate to whom the policeman was leading Burman. This was no other than Dearsley himself.

It seems that Burman had scarcely left his house before it occurred to Skilsmyth that a case of such gross cruelty ought not to be allowed to pass unnoticed; and the assault which he had witnessed having been mentioned to Dearsley by Skilsmyth, they sent down word into the village for the constable to take Tom into custody, and bring him before his worship, intending to examine the child's person and fine him for the assault committed. When, however, the depositions came to be taken, the surgeon, having examined Totty's person, declared that there were several burns about the lower parts of the legs which fully carried out the child's accusation.

Totty himself was in such pain that his statement was rather incoherent in his second account of it; but enough was shown

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by the testimony of the surgeon and the policeman, to determine the magistrate in committing Burman to prison on the charge of attempting to kill the child by burning, in order that he might take his trial before the judge of assizes, who was expected to be going the circuit in a week or ten days.

The morning after Totty's admission to the infirmary, his life was pronounced in danger by the surgeon. Every skill, and kindness, and attention that could be shown him was, however, afforded by the medical authorities of the establishment, in whose opinion it was, for many days, doubtful whether the case would terminate fatally or not.

In the midst of this perplexity the judge of assize arrived in the county town, and the grand jury found an indictment against Burman for an assault, with intent to murder.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

How much it is to be regretted in this imperfect world, that our sympathies are never sufficiently aroused for sorrow, or for suffering, until it is very generally too late to render any effectual assistance.

That the children of the poor were bruised, beaten, bought, sold, stolen, tortured, and murdered, in order to supply the climbing-boys' system with victims, had been known for many years in a northern county of England before the committal of Mr. Thomas Burman for attempting to roast his climbing-boy, and yet none cared to interfere beyond a few insignificant Quakers, who were always dubbed "mad enthusiasts" whenever their conduct was mentioned; but, as soon as it was known that a bill had been found by the grand jury, and that the case would come on for trial before the celebrated Lord Chief Justice Diamond, it is astonishing how rapidly the case ran the rounds of the newspapers. All those elegant ladies who never take the trouble to give such simple orders in their households as shall prevent the use of climbing-boys, immediately had the tenderest sympathy for the "poor dear little child," and the

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utmost abhorrence for the "horrid brute of a master." Countesses, and honourable mistresses, all declared their intention of going to hear the case tried. Everybody who knew Lord Diamond, and was aware of the detestation and abhorrence which existed in his noble heart against every species of oppression, was quite sure that he would give the case his utmost attention, and, if the prisoner were found guilty, leave him tc be hanged.

Day after day the case was adjourned by special mention in the Crown Court of the county, and the evidence of the surgeon read as to the state of health of the little patient.

At last the surgeons pronounced him sufficiently recovered to be taken into court to give his evidence, and, from an early hour before the court opened, ladies by the hundreds were thronging with orders from the sheriffs to get good seats to hear the trial.

Immediately after the clock struck nine, the sound of trumpets was heard at the court-house gate, and a few seconds afterwards the door behind the judgment-seat was opened, and the imposing person of Lord Diamond, clothed in judicial scarlet and ermine, was seen to enter; and the trial began.

Tom Burman, who, by the aid of much soap and water, had recovered a little from his usual amount of soot, glanced up from beneath his shaggy eyebrows at the distinguished judge who had now become the arbiter of his fate.

Ah, Tom Burman! hold your own—this time, at least, you are not placed before any unpaid magistrate, conscious of the guilt of using climbing-children himself in his own house, and, therefore, paralysed in heart and mind in the observance of his oath for the administration of justice upon a brother offender. Well may you tremble, Tom Burman. You will meet no Marquis of Hardheart this time in the noble and learned lord who sits upon the bench before you. For once, at least, you have found a judge who will not shelter a criminal by participation in his guilt, or take upon himself to pronounce the laws of his country absurd, because they protect the helpless and defend the weak. No, Tom Burman, though you were the greatest potentate on all the earth—though in your own person you

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combined all the power of the House of Commons—though you represented all the dignity of the King of England, all would be alike powerless to deter in the execution of his duty the fearless soul and upright mind of Lord Diamond—all would be scorned and despised, chastised and overcome, in a career of cruelty and oppression. Admirably did Lord Diamond look the character which history will award him. It may happen that there may be some who will read these pages on both sides of the Atlantic, who have never had an opportunity of beholding that gentle and warm-hearted Chief Justice, who was in his own person so perfect a representation of the post he held. I will describe him.

In height, Lord Chief Justice Diamond was slightly above six feet, firmly and elegantly framed. His person seemed somewhat slight for his imposing figure. His nose was large, and strongly marked the Roman courage of his character; his eyes large and expressive; his mouth and chin nicely chiselled, and bespeaking all the determination which was found in his mind. His voice was full, sweet, and sonorous in the extreme. A great sense of dignity pervaded all his movements; and, if ever a man was cut out for a Chief Justice, Diamond was that one. His career through life had been one signally marked in fighting the battles of the weak against the strong; and, in the memorable case which connected his name with that of his intimate friend Lord Brilliant, the kindred qualities of these two great ornaments of the English bar shone out resplendently, and gave them both a place, not only in the history of their time, but in the history of the world. In private life never did anyone more fully appreciate the fun and humour of others, or prove more ready to contribute his own share to the general mirth. In all the relations of life he was tender, loving, and beloved—the father of many children who adored him.

Where, Tom Burman, tell me where you could have found an individual less likely to screen or favour such an offence as yours?

If there is a point on which England has to be proud, it is the production of men like Diamond; and the art of setting

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them with such peculiar lustre as that which surrounds the bench of English judges.

Strongly as Diamond must have felt against such a criminal as Burman, yet before no man was Burman more sure of having every particle of justice which could be possibly awarded in his favour.

With all her faults, it must be confessed that Great Britain has attained, in this difficult matter, a proud pre-eminence over all the other nations of the earth; and, therefore, let her have the credit which is her due, even at the very time we convict her of nursing in her bosom the villany of such a system as that of the climbing-boys.

The trial began by the officer of the court calling the attention of the prisoner to the fact that his jury were about to be sworn, and that, if he had any objection to make to any of them, he must make that objection before they kissed the book. They took their oaths, standing up in the jury-box, and then sat down. The prisoner made no objection, and then the clerk of the assize said, "Prisoner, have you any counsel or attorney?"

In answer to this question, Tom Burman touching the lock of his forehead, fixed his eye on Lord Diamond, and said, "My lord, I am a poor man; I have no money to pay lawyers. I wish your lordship would be kind enough to give me a counsel."

"Prisoner," said Lord Diamond, in reply, "I have no power to assign counsel to you, but I have no doubt that there is some gentleman at the bar sufficiently humane to watch over your case, if you wish it."

"I do wish it, my lord."

"Very well. Mr. Roper," said his lordship, "I think you are the senior stuff gown in court. Are you engaged in this case?"

"No, my lord."

"Will you have the kindness to become the counsel for the prisoner?"

"With pleasure, my lord. Will your lordship allow me just to read over the depositions before the case begins?"

"Certainly, Mr. Roper. Here is my copy, with many thanks to you for your obliging assistance."

While Mr. Roper thus, at a minute's notice, undertook to

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defend a man on a capital charge, he glanced over the depositions before the trial began. The court remained waiting, but, as there were not many witnesses in the case, the learned counsel in about five minutes finished the perusal of the document, folded it up, handed it back to his lordship, and the case began by the senior counsel for the Crown, Mr. Spencer, one of her Majesty's counsel, stating to the jury, in a narrative form, the facts he was about to prove. This done, the first witness called was Mr. James Skilsmyth.

The first two or three questions merely went to prove who and what Mr. Skilsmyth was, and how he came to be present on the morning of the outrage at the house where it began.

"On this morning, Mr. Skilsmyth, did you see the prisoner at the bar?"

"Yes, I saw him in the kitchen; a soot-cloth hung before the kitchen-chimney. I saw him draw some bloody and sharp instrument, which I afterwards found on the ground, which was a shoemaker's awl, from his pocket, and put his hand and arm into the soot-cloth—"

"Stop, stop, witness," said the counsel for the prisoner. "My lord, I have an objection to make to this witness's evidence being received. The prisoner, my lord, is indicted for an attempt to murder a little child, Henry Smith, and the attempt is laid as having been made by attempting to burn his body. Now, if the depositions which your lordship has before you are correct, my learned friend does not pretend to say that this attempt at burning this boy took place in the kitchen of Mr. Dearsley. I apprehend, therefore, that my learned friend is not at liberty to prove, by the mouth of this witness, that some other offence took place in Mr. Dearsley's kitchen—namely, some violent or atrocious assault, which, however reprehensible it may be, is not the offence laid in the indictment, and not the offence, therefore, which the prosecution is called upon to prove. I submit, therefore, my learned friend cannot give evidence of any offence in the kitchen of Mr. Dearsley, but he is confined to proving the facts of the offence which he alleges to have amounted to an attempt to kill this boy by burning. Now, as this witness was not present at the time of this last offence, I

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submit he cannot give the evidence my learned friend is seeking to extract from him."

Having taken this objection, Mr. Roper sat down, and his learned opponent, Mr. Spencer, rose to reply.

"My lord, in answer to the objection of my learned friend, I submit that he has quite mistaken the object for which the present witness is called. I am about to examine this witness, not to prove a different offence from that laid in the indictment, but to prove some other circumstances so nearly connected with the offence that they become part of the *res gestæ*, and, therefore, are quite admissible, as tending to show what was the *animus* of the prisoner at the time the offence was committed. In point of fact, I submit to your lordship that whatever took place in Mr. Dearsley's kitchen was only a part of one continuing transaction, which was consummated by what took place in the lodging of the prisoner."

Mr. Spencer resumed his seat.

Mr. Roper arose in reply. "I am entirely in your lordship's hands as to whether it is a fair construction of this evidence to say, that a circumstance taking place in the house of Mr. Dearsley can be construed as part of the continuing transaction with something that took place in another house a mile off; nothing remaining to connect them but the fact of the principal actors being the same, and their passing from one place to another. I submit, my lord, there is no sufficient connexion here. They are two different transactions, and evidence is quite inadmissible of what took place at the first house, in order to prejudice the jury's consideration of what took place at the second."

Mr. Roper having resumed his seat—

"I am clearly of opinion," said Lord Chief Justice Diamond, "that in this case the evidence of Mr. Skilsmyth is quite admissible. This is an indictment for an assault with intent to commit murder. The whole gist of the offence lies in the *animus* which actuated the prisoner at the time that he made such attempt, if he did make it. Suppose this had been the case of a quarrel, would it not have been perfectly admissible to show how the quarrel arose, and afterwards leave it to the jury to

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say whether the act that constituted the offence was the result of a revengeful feeling existing at the time of that quarrel? Certainly it would. Are the facts altered because that quarrel happened to involve an assault? Certainly not. So in this case, if there were no quarrel, there were certain circumstances arising which are supposed to have incensed the mind of the prisoner at the bar; and if the learned counsel for the Crown should prove that certain acts followed within so short a space of time, as shall raise the natural presumption that one series of actions resulted from the other, they formed clearly one continuing transaction, which must all be proved. But if you wish, I will make a note of your objection."

"Thank you, my lord," said Mr. Roper.

The Lord Chief Justice made a note on his minute of the objection, and the case once more proceeded.

"Now, Mr. Skilsmyth, do you say that you saw the prisoner with some sharp bloody instrument in his hand, his head and arm up the chimney?"

"I do."

"What followed?"

"I heard a violent cry, as if of some child in great pain, and immediately afterwards the noise of some one falling inside the fireplace; and a little boy in a sweep's dress—if dress it could be called, for the child was almost naked—came tumbling down the chimney over the prisoner's back. I interfered. Some words took place between us as to the cruelty he had used and the illegality of his sending a child up the chimney, all which he defended on the strength of the example set by the magistrates, all the magistrates doing the same: finally he went off with the boy, as I understood, to get a machine."

"Did you refuse to allow him to sweep the chimney without a machine?"

"Yes, I did."

"Then he was disappointed of the profit of sweeping the chimney?"

"Yes, except he brought a machine, he was."

"Where was he to get one?"

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"I concluded he was gone to borrow one, or that he had one of his own. After he was gone, I mentioned what I had seen to Mr. Dearsley, who sent the policeman for the prisoner to bring him up on a charge for the assault."

"Do you ask this witness any questions?" said Mr. Spencer, addressing himself to the counsel for the prisoner.

"I'll see," said Mr. Roper, and, leaning across the dock, the learned counsel whispered for a minute or two with the prisoner.

When this conference was ended, Mr. Roper turned round—

"Did you tell the prisoner at the bar that he had been breaking the law by sending this child up the chimney?"

"Yes, I did; it is forbidden by the Climbing Act."

"Did you lay your hand on the prisoner's collar, and throw him violently on the stone pavement?"

"I believe I did."

"Believe you did, sir; do you not know you did?"

"Yes, I did."

"Then, why did not you say so, sir, at once? Do you call that keeping the law, Mr. Skilsmyth, or breaking the law?"

"Well," said Skilsmyth, "I do not know what you lawyers may say to it, but, as a plain man of sense, I call it keeping the law—of nature, at any rate—to protect the weak against the strong."

A slight cheer was here heard in court.

"Silence in the court," roared out the deep bass of the usher's voice.

"Well, Mr. Skilsmyth, you used some hard language to the prisoner, did you not?"

"I know I tried to do so. If there had been one term in the English language harder than another, I should have used it with pleasure when I saw that poor little boy of five years old stabbed by such a ruffian for refusing to do what no child, as I conceive, can do without the utmost violence being applied—that is, climb a dark, filthy chimney."

"Did you see the instrument run into the child?"

"No; I heard the cry of agony, and I saw the child lying writhing and bleeding on the ground."

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"Then you saw him go away to get a machine?"

"As I supposed."

The learned counsel here paused for a second, but, as if unable to think of any further question in his client's interest, then sat down.

"Call Policeman Thomas Longstaff. You may go, sir," said Mr. Spencer. And not at all sorry to quit that place of penance—a witness-box—Skilsmyth with great alacrity disappeared.

"Policeman," said Mr. Spencer's junior counsel, Mr. Wyatt, "did you take the prisoner into custody?"

"I did."

"Tell the court what took place when you did so."

"Having received some information from the last witness, I went to the lodgings of the prisoner, and demanded admittance for the police. I found the door locked, and heard some violent screaming, which subsided the moment I spoke. I rattled the door for some minutes before I could get admittance, during which time the voice of some one on the other side of the door demanded who I was, and what I wanted. I said I was a policeman; he said he would let me in. I then heard the lock shoot backwards and forwards for some time, till I thought they were shamming; and, suspecting something, I ran against the door with my shoulder and my whole weight, and burst it open. When I got into the room, I found a little boy lying down in one corner—all his clothes quite wet—crying, and the prisoner standing near the door. I told the prisoner I came to take him into custody upon a charge of wounding a little boy. I asked the child what he was crying for, and he said that the prisoner had burnt him; that he had put him up the chimney, and said he would kill him because he was of no use; that he had lit a fire under him, and then pulled him down, and put him into a tub full of water in the yard."

"During the time the child was making this statement did the prisoner say anything?"

"Yes, he repeatedly interrupted the boy, calling him an ungrateful little liar, and denied the truth of what he was saying."

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"Then what did you do?"

"I took the prisoner into custody, and took him up before the magistrate, Mr. Dearsley."

"Do you ask this witness any question, Mr. Roper?" said the counsel for the Crown, sitting down.

"Well, policeman," said Mr. Roper, "did the prisoner make any attempt to escape?"

"No, none, sir."

"You say he denied the charge the boy made against him?"

"Yes."

"He said it was not true?"

"Yes."

"Did you put your hand up the chimney to see if it was warm?"

"No, I did not."

"Was the boy examined by a surgeon?"

"I believe so; the surgeon is here."

"Oh, the surgeon is here—very well. Is the little boy in court?"

"I believe he is well enough to come from the hospital to-day, sir, but I have not seen him."

Mr. Roper whispered for a moment to the prisoner at the bar, and then sat down.

"Call Mr. Browning, the surgeon," said Mr. Spencer.

Mr. Browning having been sworn, his examination proceeded thus:—

"Are you a surgeon, practising in the village of Clothrack, near Leeds?"

"Yes, I am."

"On the morning of this occurrence did you examine the person of the little boy, Henry Smith, who will be produced in court presently?"

"Yes, I did."

"What appearance did his body present?"

"Well, it was covered with scars, and bruises, and burns. It presented a mass of scars, and burns, and bruises."

"Well, now, confine your attention, Mr. Browning, to the burns. On what part of the body did you see the burns?"

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"The soles of the feet, the calves of the legs, the outer portion of the thigh, and a part of the back; all exhibited extensive marks of recent burns. There were some punctured wounds also in the outer portion of the thigh, near the insertion of the *glutæi maximi*."

"Well, Mr. Browning, we will let those hard names alone for to-day; our business is simply with the burns. How recent should you say those burns were?"

"Well, I should think they had been inflicted—"

Here the counsel for the prisoner interrupted—"Don't say 'inflicted,' sir; it is not proved yet that the child had not burnt himself by accident."

Thus corrected, Mr. Browning mutely bowed, and said, "Well, I should say the burns were caused within twenty-four hours of my seeing him."

"Can you fix their occurrence within any more narrow date than twenty-four hours?"

"My own impression is—"

"Do not give us your own impressions, sir," interrupted Mr. Roper, "without you are prepared to swear to them."

"Well, I cannot swear within twenty-four hours when the burns were caused."

"What was the state of the child's health when you first saw him?" resumed Mr. Spencer.

"The child was in imminent danger of his life. He was sent over to the infirmary at Leeds, and I visited him several times from taking an interest in the case, and for many days I was very doubtful if he could possibly survive."

"Has he quite recovered from those burns?"

"Well, no, I should say he has not quite recovered from them, and, possibly, he never may. There is a contraction of the *tendon Achilles*, from which at first he was quite lame; but by putting the leg into some delicate machinery, it has been suspended and drawn out by a weight over a pulley, the weight having been increased (by placing an additional penny piece upon it every morning), and allowed night and day to act upon the leg to draw it straight. By those means a great deal of the lameness has already abated; and, if those means are still used when

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the child goes back from this trial, it is possible that he may yet recover from the injuries inflicted upon him. For several days the fever ran very high, and the child was quite delirious. The delirium, however, has subsided within the last twenty-four hours, and I am in hopes that the excitement of the trial may not bring back any dangerous symptoms."

"Can he walk?"

"Oh, no, certainly not. A litter has been contrived for him to be brought into court, that his examination may be taken before the assizes close. I could have wished the assizes had lasted a day longer; he would have borne the examination better to-morrow, perhaps, than to-day."

"Do you consider him, then, quite out of danger?"

"Out of danger; but very little would jeopardise the case again."

"Thank you, sir;" and Mr. Spencer sat down.

"Do you ask this witness any question, Mr. Roper?"

"No," said Mr. Roper, evidently fearing the danger of such a witness; and making a bow to the bench, Mr. Browning retired.

"Now, my lord," said Mr. Spencer, "we propose to bring in this little child in his litter, and perhaps your lordship would not object to allow him to be brought in upon the bench by your lordship's side, as his voice is still very faint and low.'

"Certainly, Mr. Spencer," said Lord Diamond.

A pause of some minutes' duration succeeded, and nothing could exceed the intense interest and curiosity that were seen to pervade the court, as all eyes were directed towards the door which led to the further end of the judgment-bench, where the litter of the outraged child was expected to appear.

Several ladies were seen using smelling-bottles and their fans, as if preparing for a faint. Numberless dowagers evidently felt the necessity of showing their extreme sentimentalism, the great sympathy they had with injured innocence, the strong abhorrence of the murderous ruffian at the bar. Ah! gentle, sensitive, fainting ladies of Great Britain, may not your American sisters humbly inquire whether you would not show your sympathy to more advantage, and to infinitely greater

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purpose, if you made a few more inquiries in your households as to how the work of cleansing your chimneys is performed?—if you were to leave strict orders upon your butlers, your stewards, your footmen, your cooks, and your housemaids, that no sweep should be allowed to enter your doors attended by children of tender age, who must be their slaves, and are sure to be their victims?—if you were to insist that no chimney-sweeper should be employed within your doors unless using machinery — so simple, so effective as it has proved to be in London, the largest city in the world? What say you, ladies of England? How answer you the charge now made against you by your American sisters? Have you, or have you not, in this matter, exhibited all the guilt of connivance, and every crime of indifference? How can you say that you are anything else than fellow-criminals with such ruffians as Tom Burman, when it is only, by your cold-blooded and callous carelessness, that such infinite violence has continued to infest that land of boasted freedom, the land of Great Britain? How can you talk to your American sisters of the Fugitive Slave Law and the domestic institutions of the Southern States, while you are utterly indifferent whether a system more enslaved and more degrading is reared and fostered with every current of warmth that passes from your own hearths? Think of this, as you gather round each cheerful circle—blush, as you well may, that your firesides should ever be permitted by you to be the cause of such ignorance and cruelty, and ask yourselves how long you will suffer this disgrace of England and English people to continue?

CHAPTER XXXIV.

After the pause in court had lasted a few moments, some men were seen approaching through the doorway which led to the bench towards the Lord Chief Justice; and by the care with which they bore the little burden, every person present in that court was advertised of the danger which still hung over the head of the little sufferer.

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As the child first appeared through the doorway, his little pale face lying on the pillow, every spectator present who could get a glimpse of him by standing on tiptoe rose, at the risk of losing their seats. Great was the excitement. Ah! worthy English people, how infinitely more intense would have been your feelings and your pity could you have known that that poor helpless, outraged child was a little English earl, heir to the high-sounding titles of Baron Deer-Glen, Viscount Ulswater, Earl of Hopemore, Marquis of Hardheart, beside others, by which his ancestors had been raised step by step in the peerage.

Since poor little Totty had been taken to the infirmary several warm baths had been given him—his old acquaintance, from whom he had been parted so long and so cruelly; good wholesome soap had been administered with no stint to every part of his person that could bear this detergent, and especially to his head. His hair, which from neglect had been allowed to grow long, having been carefully cleansed and washed, resumed its ancient curl, and, carefully dressed by his nurse, it once more asserted the prerogative of nature in setting off and adorning the rare beauty that had once belonged to his features. The lapse of years had completely obliterated the flushed remnants of the small-pox. Not only did he now appear with scarcely a scar of its fatal marks—for sickness had given him a gentle pale, transparent tint which the long dark curling hair exquisitely relieved—but his eyelashes had once more grown again. Thanks to the down draught of the chimney, both the hair and eyelashes had been spared from those flames which Tom Burman had so tenderly lit for him, and which had thus providentially been confined in their operation to the lower and less vital portions of his infant person.

"He doesn't look like a sweep," muttered one or two ladies. "What a lovely child!" burst involuntarily from other connoisseurs of infant beauty. "What a murderous brute to illuse such a cherub as that!" said other members of the gentle sex. But one pair of eyes paid Totty a far more delicate and decided tribute of admiration than any others in that court.

Ah! they were a pair of eyes! Where, even under the banner

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of the stars and stripes, could be found orbs more exquisite and beautiful than those which shone with such a soft and soul-subduing lustre beneath the brows of Gwinnethlyn D'Auberville? Those eyes were fixed intently upon poor Totty's large and languid orbs; and as the bearers of the litter brought the poor child and placed him on the bench beside her, one bright tear after another trickled down her speaking face, and fell upon his pillow! And who was Gwinnethlyn D'Auberville? Aye, that is the question.

The country-house of Lady Charlotte D'Auberville was distant only a few miles from the assize town; and when Lady Charlotte heard that a most interesting case of attempted child murder by a horrid sweep was to be tried at this assizes by the handsome Lord Diamond, her ladyship expressed a wish to the high sheriff to be present. Lady D'Auberville's wishes were commands with most gentlemen in her county, and the sheriff took care that Lady Charlotte should be seated at Lord Diamond's left hand upon the judgment-seat. Beside Lady D'Auberville sat her only child, Gwinnethlyn. The bearers of Totty's litter could not think of disturbing a person of Lady Charlotte's rank and position in the county, and they therefore so arranged the litter that it rested just at Gwinnethlyn's left hand.

"What beautiful long fingers that little dear has!" whispered one of the ladies who stood not far from the spot where the litter was placed, and whose observant eyes had been attracted to the sick child's skeleton-like arm that lay outside the coverlid.

"Now, Mr. Spencer," said Lord Diamond, "will you proceed? Here is the little boy Henry Smith; you had better come a little closer to the child that he may hear your questions."

"Yes, my lord," said the counsel for the Crown, moving from his place opposite to his lordship, and coming round to that point of the bar-table which was nearest to poor Totty.

"Usher of the court, is the boy sworn?"

"Stop!" said the counsel for the prisoner. "My lord, before the oath is tendered to this little child, I should wish him to be examined on the *voir dire*."

"Certainly," said Lord Diamond. "Do you wish to examine him yourself, or shall I do it?"

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"If your lordship will be kind enough to take the task off my hands, your lordship will discharge it infinitely better," said Mr. Roper, thus requiring the Lord Chief Justice to ascertain whether poor Totty had sufficient knowledge of a future state to enlighten his mind as to the responsibilities of the oath he was about to take—a very wise, and indeed indispensable precaution in the administration of all laws which are made to depend on the sworn testimony of witnesses.

A deep silence immediately pervaded the remotest corner of the court at this crisis of the proceedings. Everybody well knew that the whole case depended upon the child's testimony. If the child had been religiously instructed, and knew the nature of an oath, and the responsibility which besets all who are sworn to tell the truth, then all that he could say as to the acts of the prisoner would be heard, and admitted against him; but, if unfortunately it should happen that the poor little child's mind was as dark as his slavery had been perfect, then, although he himself was the victim of the prisoner's brutality, it would be impossible to receive in evidence one word that he might say in proof of the villany that had been wreaked upon him.

Leaning across Lady Charlotte D'Auberville and Gwinnethlyn, the Chief Justice stood up; and, in a very gentle tone of voice, yet so round, harmonious, and clear that it was heard to the farthest corner of the court, Lord Diamond, with an amount of tenderness that his usually stern and grave countenance hardly indicated, addressed the invalid—"Has anyone ever talked to you about religion, my little fellow?"

"Yes, sir, one of my nurses a long time ago," said Totty.

"What did she tell you of it?"

Totty was silent for a moment, and then his high but sweet little pipes were heard replying, "I forget, sir."

"Do you believe there is a God?"

A long pause followed this question, and the deepest excitement was felt throughout the court during that silence. Every eye was turned to the little suffering child as he raised himself on one elbow, looked up smilingly in the face of the Lord Chief Justice, and then looked down at his hand, and then looked around the crowded court; and as he saw each eye fixed upon

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his, the crimson colour mounted upon his cheek. He again looked up in Lord Diamond's face, but made no reply.

"Do you know where wicked people go to?" said Lord Diamond.

Another pause followed. At last, Totty answered, "No, sir."

"Do you know what speaking the truth means?"

"No, sir."

"Have you ever been told anything about a future world?"

"No, sir."

"Did you ever hear who God is?"

"No, sir."

"Did you ever hear of a place of future punishment?"

"No, sir."

"Did you ever hear of a place called Hell?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know what become of wicked people who tell lies?"

"No, sir."

With a deep sigh, Lord Diamond resumed his seat; and, after a minute's pause, he said, "I am afraid, Mr. Spencer, that the evidence of this poor little child is inadmissible."

"It is a lamentable addition, my lord, to all the other horrors of this case, to see this poor little human being—apparently, from his countenance, an intelligent child—in such a state of utter darkness."

"Have you any further evidence to produce?"

"No, my lord."

"I fear, Mr. Roper, there is too much foundation for your objection. I can't receive the evidence of this poor injured child."

"I had anticipated, my lord, the child might have been too young."

"Not at all too young, Mr. Roper. It is the brutal slavery in which this human soul has been enchained, that places the court in this most painful position. How was it, Mr. Spencer, that those who instructed you, did not see that this child had been properly taught the outlines of religion and the nature of an oath?"

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"My lord, you heard from the surgeon that it was only yesterday the symptoms of delirium subsided. The injury this poor child has received was so great that it would have been dangerous to excite the brain a day earlier than this, and it is now very doubtful what will be the effect of bringing the poor boy here: but, as it was the last day of assizes, every effort was made to bring the prisoner to trial."

"Well, it is a most lamentable spectacle, but it cannot be helped."

"Does your lordship think," said Mr. Roper, "that, independently of this child's testimony, there is any case to go to the jury in support of this indictment? I mean, my lord, an assault with intent to murder by burning."

"I will see," said Lord Diamond; and, turning over his notes, he looked at them for a few minutes, and then addressing Mr. Spencer, "I think, Mr. Spencer, if you entirely omit this child's evidence, we are left in this position:—We have an assault proved with a sharp instrument, which cannot be used under this indictment except to prove the *animus* of the prisoner, and then we have only the statements made by the child in the prisoner's presence, but, as they are denied by him, they have no further weight. All, then, that remains is the surgeon's evidence of the burns found on this child's body. The surgeon, you will remember, does not undertake to prove whether those burns were caused within twenty-four hours. If you have any further evidence which would tend to fix the date of those burns, I will hear it with pleasure."

"No, my lord, unfortunately we cannot fix the date of those burns more closely than the surgeon has done—that is, within twenty-four hours."

"Then I fear there is no evidence to go to the jury of an attempt to murder by burning. I shall therefore direct the jury to acquit the prisoner of this charge, but I shall take care that justice is not quite defeated."

"Thank you, my lord," said Mr. Roper, "that was precisely the view I should have submitted to the jury if your lordship, in your supreme judgment, had not felt it your duty to take the course you have done."

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Both counsel now sat down, and Lord Diamond, turning to the jury-box, said, "Gentlemen of the jury,—From what has already passed, you will perceive that the evidence of this little child cannot be received under the sanction of an oath, from his having been left in utter ignorance of all those truths of religion, under the responsibility of which alone, an oath can be received. At present the indictment upon which the prisoner at the bar is tried, charges him with assaulting with intent to murder this little boy, by burning him; and, to support that charge, it is necessary to prove, not only that the prisoner wished to burn him and destroy his life, but that he actually caused some combustion to take effect upon him. The evidence of the first witness was admitted to prove what was the intent passing in the prisoner's mind, and the *animus* which actuated him. The policeman proved the statement of the child as to the burning; and if the prisoner had not denied that statement, it would have been such strong evidence against him, as, coupled with the evidence of the surgeon as to the burns on his body, would have been quite sufficient to have been left to your decision; but, as the prisoner denies the statement the child made in his presence, that statement amounts to little. Unfortunately, the policeman, who appears to have been an inexperienced person, did not examine the condition of the fireplace, and we are unable to say whether it had been recently used or not. The surgeon's evidence is most important; it proves the existence of several burns upon the child's person, but, as he cannot undertake to say at what period of time within twenty-four hours those burns took place, and as there is no evidence one way or another to show that these burns might not have occurred at some other place, or even in the chimney at Mr. Dearsley's house, it is impossible for you to jump to a conclusion, and say that those burns were caused in the period of time subsequent to the child's quitting Mr. Dearsley's chimney, and prior to the policeman's apprehending the prisoner. Unfortunately, most unfortunately, this poor child's calling—that of a climbing-boy, which the law, the humane and sensible law of England has declared altogether illegal—places, as a matter of course, the poor children employed in it, in a state of the most utter ignorance and degra-

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dation. It is beyond all words disgraceful that this great country, which owes so much to God for free institutions and unparalleled prosperity, should make such an ungrateful return to Heaven as that people of rank, wealth, and authority—nay, gentlemen, I blush to say even magistrates of the land, as we have heard in evidence to-day—should persist, by defiance of all law, in continuing this state of infant slavery—the climbing system—by which children must of necessity be reared in such ignorance of all religious faith and duty that, although the worst barbarities are perpetrated on their little persons, they come into court wholly unable to take that oath which is requisite to receive their evidence and punish the wrong-doers! Owing to this fearful condition of society, it now is, that you must dismiss, with a verdict of not guilty, the prisoner at the bar. If that poor child had possessed any knowledge of the responsibility of an oath—that is, if he had known even so little of religion as would have pointed out to him that people are bound to tell the truth, and liable to punishment if they tell a falsehood—we could have tendered to him an oath, and no one, I think, can doubt the shape that his evidence would have taken. As it is, whatever feelings we may have as to the innocence or guilt of the prisoner at the bar, we have only one course before us. You must acquit him, gentlemen of the jury." * Lord Diamond, as he uttered these words, sunk back in the judgment-seat; and the clerk of assize, rising, said—

"Gentlemen of the jury, you say that the prisoner at the bar is not guilty: this is your verdict, and so you say all."

Even now there was some little demur in the jury-box before they could bring themselves to acquit the atrocious ruffian of whose violence and guilt, under the indictment, no human being in court entertained the slightest doubt.

However, a few minutes' conversation amongst themselves showed the necessity of the case, and the foreman, turning round, said—

"We find the prisoner not guilty, and we wish to know, my lord, if he can't be tried for the first assault?"

* For the history of this atrocious case of child-burning, which occurred at Nottingham in 1853, see Appendix, Note GG.

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"Gentlemen of the jury, I am glad to see that your intelligence perfectly masters the position of this case. The prisoner shall not quite escape the hands of justice. I will remand him for trial until the next assizes, and will take care that he is then tried on a totally different charge—that, namely, of his first assault, which you very properly mentioned. He shall be indicted for wounding, with intent of doing some grievous bodily harm; and in the meantime the poor child shall be so instructed that all he has to say shall be heard. Nothing but the fact of the grand jury having yesterday been discharged, prevents my ordering a bill for this offence to be immediately preferred against him. I hope, gentlemen, that when you return to your homes, you will do your best to cause respect to be paid to that most necessary law which renders illegal the sending of any person into a chimney under the age of twenty-one years, for the purpose of cleaning; and that all who are in this court will consider themselves most culpable, if they do not lend their utmost aid to cause respect to be paid to that law. It was very vainly, indeed, that we sent our fleets to bombard the hold of the Algerines to set free Christian slaves, if we are to nurse them in the bosom of our own country, by permitting the traffic and the cruelties of such persons as the prisoner at the bar. Mr. Spencer," addressing the counsel for the Crown, "who is going to take charge of this poor little child?"

"My lord, I am instructed to say, that before next assizes he shall have received every requisite religious tuition from the chaplain of the hospital."

"That is not the whole question, Mr. Spencer. No one can have heard this case without seeing that society owes a deep debt of reparation to this poor friendless, outraged little being: and I think, out of such a concourse of English people as fill this court, some one might be found who would rescue this interesting boy from such a bondage for the future. Is there nobody who will undertake the charge of him, and see that he is brought up in some sphere of life, secure from the repetition of such awful outrages as we have heard detailed to-day? Is there no one within these walls who will undertake to care for him?"

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A pause followed this question, and, at last, a little tiny soft, exquisite voice close to Lord Diamond's elbow was heard to say, "I will take care of him, my lord."

His lordship turned rapidly round to see who was the speaker; and the dove-like eyes of Gwinnethlyn D'Auberville fixed upon him, at once declared that her soft heart overcoming all fears and all scruples, all pride and all selfishness, had spoken those welcome words.

"Hush! hush! Gwinnethlyn! Don't be so bold," said Lady Charlotte, in an agony lest her daughter's offer should be accepted; at the same time tapping her child rather smartly upon the shoulder with that fan which, during the interesting parts of the trial, had been used with such lackadaisical interest and deep devotion to the cause of suffering humanity. But Lord Diamond well knew who that exquisite being was who had made the generous offer, and who Lady Charlotte was who strove to repress it; and knowing that her fortune and position would secure kind treatment and a certain independence to poor Totty, he was resolved that the offer should not be easily withdrawn.

"Do not reprove her, Lady Charlotte," said Lord Diamond, extending his hand to the little girl; and as she gave him hers and blushed and looked down, he said in a tone which was audible throughout the court, "You can never be too bold, my dear, in doing good;" then, rising from his seat, he took the long and attenuated hand of poor little Totty, and placing it in Gwinnethlyn's hand, "I give this little sufferer into your charge this day, and I pray God to crown your head with many blessings for this deed of truest charity." Then before a word could be added by poor Lady Charlotte, his lordship, still holding both the children's hands in his own, said—

"Gentlemen of the jury, as it is nearly two o'clock, you may take a quarter of an hour's refreshment before the next case is tried, which may probably last till late this evening."

"My lord," said Mr. Spencer, as the crowd in court was breaking up, but now paused a minute to hear what was to be said, "the gentlemen at the bar are unwilling that this poor little boy should be taken into that lady's service without some little

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outfit, and we have subscribed a handful of guineas down here, which we hope may be useful in starting him in a fairer career than his last."

"Thank you, Mr. Spencer," said his lordship; "you must allow my associate to double your contribution whatever it may be."

While this conversation was going on between the bar and the bench, the jury hastily put their heads together, and, as his lordship was turning away, said, "My lord, the gentlemen of the jury would like to add a little subscription to that of your lordship and the bar, if your lordship will condescend to accept our humble offerings."

"*Finis coronat opus*, Mr. Spencer," said Lord Diamond, extending his hand towards the bar, and bowing to the jury; then adding to the latter, "Every presentment of a jury meets my deep respect—few more than this, gentlemen."

In another moment Lord Diamond had passed through the door of the judge's seat, and gone to take his luncheon; while Lady Charlotte, half flattered at the public distinction of her daughter's charity, and half annoyed at her being fixed with the care of the sick child, debated with the clerk of assize the course that had better be pursued. It was finally arranged that Totty should be placed in her own carriage and driven to her country-seat, under the escort of the medical man who had given evidence at the trial, he being made the bearer of a letter to the housekeeper, placing at the service of the medical man everything that was necessary for the child's comfort and convalescence.

The only person thoroughly dissatisfied with the day's proceedings was that pet of the unpaid magistrates, and *protégé* of the Marquis of Hardheart, who, instead of being turned out once more free upon the streets to buy and sell the juvenile portion of the British public at five shillings a head, found himself hurried off to prison, there to pass the dreary interval between one assize and another, with the comfortable conviction on his own mind that on his next day of trial he would be sure to get as severe a sentence as the law would allow to be passed.

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CHAPTER XXXV.

On the morning that followed the events recorded in the last chapter, Lady Charlotte D'Auberville descended in an exceedingly rugged temper to the breakfast-table. There, however, she met her only child, Gwinnethlyn, radiant with delight.

"Oh, mamma, here is such charming news!"

"Pooh—pooh, child! don't bore me with your charming news. You gave me such charming news yesterday as will be enough for me for I don't know how many years. What are we to do with this horrid sick sweep-boy in the house? What do you think of that for charming news?"

"Oh, my dear Bu'," (Gwinnethlyn's abbreviation for beauty, which she always called her mother,) "don't be angry with my poor little pet. You know it is much better to have a pet child than to have a pet dog, or a pet cat, or a pet parrot; and if I had taken a fancy to any of these, you would have thought nothing of it. I'm sure Lady Giddy Talbot spends more on her lap-dog in sugar than my pet is likely to cost me. No, Bu'," said the exquisite beauty, putting her hand up before her mother's mouth, "I will not hear anything that you can say against him. Look here, here is a real one hundred pound note which that dear judge, Lord Diamond, has made one of his officers send me. This was the subscription made in court yesterday to give the poor little boy his outfit. Think of that, mamma. One hundred pounds! Why, you never will be able to spend it."

"One hundred pounds," said Lady Charlotte, taking in her hand that charming specimen of typography which somehow or other has such a very soothing influence upon the mind of both peer and peasant, or rather it would have if the unfortunate peasant could get hold of a specimen a little more frequently. "Well, certainly, this is some little reparation, I must admit, for having quartered this child upon me in such an unceremonious manner; and now, I suppose, Gwinnethlyn, as you have taken this whim, you intend to have him for your page when

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he is well enough. A part of this money can buy him his first suit of livery."

"Page, Bu'! What, that dear little thing, who is so like great grandpapa's picture, turned into a servant? I won't hear of it."

"Like great grandpapa's picture, child! How dare you say such a thing? A little common sweep-boy like the picture of one of the most distinguished men of his time! Do you know who you are talking of?—do you know that the Earl of Hopemore was one of the most distinguished ornaments of the Court of George the Second?"

"Never mind, Bu', where he was an ornament; he couldn't be more beautiful than that poor little creature upstairs. I have been to see him this morning, and now he is nicely washed and his hair curled by Phillis you don't know how beautiful he looks! I won't have any livery put upon him. You know, Bu', I always wanted to have a brother, and, therefore, little Harry is to be my brother; he is not to be my page."

"Well, Gwinnethlyn, have it your own way, but don't bore me to death now. Do get down from my knee, and let me get a little breakfast in peace. Miss Watson, will you have the goodness to touch the bell, and give me the eau-de-cologne? I think the air is very oppressive this morning. Really my nerves are so shattered by the excitement of yesterday, and the looks of that horrible ruffian who was called the prisoner, that I had nothing but frightful faces in my dreams all night, and now I feel so languid I hardly know what to do."

There was one thing, however, which Lady Charlotte certainly did do, and that was, fold up the hundred pound note and put it quietly in her note-case; after which she rapidly despatched a very sufficient portion of pigeon-pie which the butler handed to her, and upon this foundation laid a very respectable superstructure of coffee, eggs, and apricot marmalade.

In a few days the surgeon reported Totty sufficiently recovered to be able to come down stairs. Happily, Miss Watson, Gwinnethlyn's governess, was of a softer spirit than Lady Charlotte; and knowing that the mother always ultimately gave way to the wishes of her only child, however vigorously she might at

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first reprobate them, Totty received every kindness in Gwinnethlyn's morning room, and, as soon as his strength permitted it, both these fair creatures set to work to develop that infant intellect which had been so cruelly oppressed by fear and ignorance.

To their surprise they continually discovered marks of a superior culture in Totty's expressions, manner, and, more than all, his appearance.*

By degrees the lameness gradually went off under the medical treatment prescribed for him, and, at the end of the first year after his being received under Lady Charlotte's roof, it was difficult to find a more beautiful or interesting boy.

Several months elapsed before the innate pride of Lady Charlotte's disposition could tolerate in her presence the gentle being whom she always called "the little sweep" when her daughter was not present. At last, however, as water wears the stone, so Gwinnethlyn's constant importunity and imperturbable good temper won her over to take some little interest in Totty's existence. By degrees the undoubted beauty of the child's person, his delicate and exquisitely-formed features, his long and taper fingers, his rosy nails, and the general elegance of his appearance, obtained a mastery over her inclinations which principle alone could not have effected; and although she could not be said to be strictly fond of anything that did not belong to herself, still, by the end of the second year, she was absolutely brought to tolerate a being whom everybody else around her loved.

In the meantime the second assizes had arrived, and, duly prepared for his examination on the *voir dire*, Totty had gone to court once more, accompanied by the Lady Charlotte and Gwinnethlyn. A different judge sat upon the bench, and a different result awaited, Tom Burman's trial.

Tired of the suspense, that worthy pleaded guilty to the indictment preferred against him, and received a sentence of fourteen years' transportation. on the strength of which he was soon afterwards clothed in grey at her Majesty's expense, and forwarded with very great care to increase the population of her Majesty's Australian colonies. Whether there to perish of

* See Appendix, Note HH.

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large fortune as a gold-digger, were matters still to be determined.

The day at length arrived when Totty having learned everything that Gwinnethlyn and her governess could teach him, being an admirable proficient in the art of horsemanship, as far as the Welsh pony allowed, and in his person a tall, robust, and remarkably handsome lad of some nine years old, Lady Charlotte's maternal fears would no longer be controlled by Gwinnethlyn's intreaties. She saw her daughter now twelve years of age; and desirous of placing out of her sight the handsome stripling who, to use her own phrase, "was utterly without prospects of any kind," she resolved to send Totty to school. Accordingly, to school he went, under the tuition of a master residing on the western sea coast, and, despite of all Gwinnethlyn's prayers, no holidays were allowed to him for two years, and only very rarely was Gwinnethlyn permitted to see one of his letters.

O Lady Charlotte! ought you not to have known your sex a little better? Who ought to have known better than you should have known, that to put anything out of a woman's reach is to fill her with a most intense desire to possess it? Who ought to have known better than you, that suddenly to banish to a distance those in whom the heart takes an interest is to fill the heart perpetually with endless images of the absent? At the end of three years you fondly flattered yourself that Gwinnethlyn had forgotten the little being she had rescued. Had she possessed no more heart than her mother, Lady Charlotte, that might easily have been so. As it was, when you reluctantly allowed to be wrung from you your consent that Totty should come home for one brief fortnight in the month of July, how speedily you were undeceived. Gwinnethlyn, too, was she not a little of a dissembler, when for the last year she had learnt to speak apparently with decreasing interest of her old playmate? Well, if she were insincere in this matter, as no doubt she was, you brought it upon yourself, Lady Charlotte; and when, at last, the evening arrived on which Totty was to return from school, how could you imagine, Lady Charlotte, when you saw Gwinnethlyn go quietly off to

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bed without waiting to see him come back—how could you imagine that there was no one thing which that fair young being more desired than to clasp his hand?

Well, so it was. Fearful that her mother should take a dislike to Totty, Gwinnethlyn deprived herself of the pleasure of waiting to receive him, and stole off to her room; while Lady Charlotte, delighted to have an opportunity of proving to the boy that he was nobody in her house, withdrew to her boudoir, and left the task of receiving Totty to his old acquaintance—the governess.

Full of delight at being once more permitted to visit the old mansion where so many delicious days had been passed, Totty returned from school; and when he entered the drawing-room, thinking only of the delight of seeing Gwinnethlyn, his heart sunk cruelly within him to find no one but the staid old governess, who, though she gave him all the cordial welcome which she was at full liberty to render, still could not make up to him the loss he sustained in missing the cherished voice of his sole protectress.

On the following morning Totty was seated at the breakfast-table, when Gwinnethlyn entered; Lady Charlotte was in the room, and watched their movements. On the part of Totty, it was a bound towards the door; on the part of Gwinnethlyn, it was that of a silent tender of the hand. So far Lady Charlotte was well pleased; but, when she saw the lovely cheek of her daughter the colour of the rose, then the colour of the lily, then of the rose again, the resolution was formed in her mind that she would soon, and most effectually, interpose some permanent barrier between them.

Alas, poor Totty! you knew so little of the mind of mothers possessing marriageable daughters, that you innocently fostered the schemes now plotting against you, instead of following Gwinnethlyn's prudent course. You knew no reason why you should not at once display all the affection which you felt towards her, who had rescued you from everything that was horrible, and blessed your life with everything that was delightful; and still at every step, as you showed your deep devotion repeated backslidings and the cat-o'-nine-tails, or to realise a

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for Gwinnethlyn, you took the most decisive measures for drawing down upon your head the hatred of her mother.

Before poor Totty had been in the house three days Lady Charlotte detested him, and all the more detested him from Gwinnethlyn's perpetually saying, "How very extraordinary is the wonderful likeness of Henry to my great grandfather's picture!"

"Stuff, child! you make me quite angry by saying that. I wish you would adopt any other quack cry but that. Where can the likeness be between people of such very different rank, to say nothing of the difference in their ages?"

That very afternoon, when dinner was concluded, Lady Charlotte put her arm through that of Totty, and drew him quietly into the garden, sending Gwinnethlyn on some other errand. "Now, my dear boy," said the hypocritical dowager, "I hear from your schoolmaster very favourable accounts of your intellectual progress. He tells me that you have made great proficiency in everything he has taught you, and that you are very fond of the sea. Is that so?"

"Yes, Lady Charlotte," said the boy. "I'm very fond of boating, and all that belongs to the sea."

"Well, you know, at your period of life, nothing is so precious as your youth. You must remember that you have no parents to go before you, and make your path clear. You have nothing to trust to but your own exertions. What do you say, therefore, supposing I were inclined to forward your wishes, and open out an honourable path before you—would you like to go to sea as a profession?"

"Oh, yes," said Totty, falling into the trap. "I should like it above all things."

"Very well, my dear," said the dowager. "I will write by the afternoon's post to my friend Lord Zaltprog, who is one of the junior lords of the Admiralty, and direct him to give you an appointment as a midshipman in one of the Queen's ships. You know, my dear, your uniform won't take long making, and the life, I am told, is quite delightful."

"I should like it very much indeed, Lady Charlotte."

"Oh, I am sure you would; in fact, to be a midshipman in

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the Queen's navy in our days is a very different thing to what it used to be. Now it is a charming existence. You go aboard the most beautiful ships, amid every refinement of science and art, and, when the wind is not favourable, I am told you get up the steam. Then you go from one agreeable port to another. All the exquisite productions of tropical climates are placed before you in the most luxuriant profusion. You sleep on board, it is true, at night; in the day-time you are constantly riding about in the most beautiful scenery, and shooting, and hunting; and very charming balls, I understand, are given to the officers, and nice little parties of pleasure are made up for them, at every port they go to; and the captains in our days are really such very superior men—elegant men of rank, you know—not those horrid low creatures that one used to hear of. Oh, I am told that, if anyone wishes to enjoy life really, they should be a young man in the Queen's navy. Indeed, it is almost the couch unruffled even by the rose-leaf. And then, you know, to see all those beautiful places, Naples, Rome, Genoa, Constantinople, Palermo, and to spend perhaps a month at each, with the most exquisite skies, and the water such a deep beautiful blue, and to see all the varied costumes of the different nations—oh, really, I think if I were a young man, there is no course in life I should prefer to that of serving my country in one of her Majesty's—I cannot say ships, for they are really not ships in our days: they are all yachts, and you *would* like it? Now, confess to me, would you not, Harry?"

"Indeed I should, Lady Charlotte, very much."

"Very well, then, my dear child, it is agreed. I will go and write the letter to Lord Zaltprog;" and Lady Charlotte, turning back to the house, chuckled in her own mind at having done a remarkably clever thing.

The following was her letter to the junior lord of the Admiralty:—

"My dear Lord Zaltprog—

"I received last week a note from my man of business who manages for our party in the borough of Purevotc. He tells me that you are not attending quite enough to the registratioin,

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and that if a dissolution should come unexpectedly, as I understand is not unlikely from the vacillating course of Lord John Diddle, our party might be hardly strong enough to return you with your usual majority. Do see to this, and write to my man of business, poor Shuffle Palm, who is a good creature, and tell him he may put me down for a subscription of five-and-twenty guineas for the expenses of the registration. I hope dear Lady Zaltprog has recovered from her excessive grief at the loss of her Blenheim which I saw advertised for several days in the *Times*. It was a shocking calamity, and I really sympathise with her. By the way, will you send me down, by return of post, an appointment for a young friend of mine, Mr. Henry Smith, who is anxious to see a little of the service of his country afloat, and would not object to pass a year or two as midshipman in one of the Queen's ships? Make my best *souvenirs* to the First Lord and Lady Shoveastarne, and

"Believe me, ever faithfully yours,
"CHARLOTTE D'AUBERVILLE."

"To the Right Honble.
"The Lord Zaltprog, M.P."

By the return of post down came the following reply:—

"MY DEAR LADY D'AUBERVILLE—

"Wishes are always commands from you. I have written to Shuffle Palm to take every step for securing the registration, and have put your ladyship down for a five-and-twenty guinea subscription. Lady Zaltprog's poodle has been traced to Ostend, I am thankful to say, by the exertions of the police, and there is every hope it will soon be restored to its disconsolate owner. With respect to the appointment of cadets in the navy, I grieve to tell your ladyship that these horrid Radicals have so bored her Majesty's Government in parliament that it is exceedingly difficult to secure an appointment with anything like the promptitude you desire. Lord Shoveastarne, the first lord, has, in point of fact, all the appointments in his own hands; and there are so many Irish patriots returned now to parliament, since the Catholic Emancipation Bill passed, that

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the whole taxation of the country would be insufficient to supply them with patronage, if one-tenth of their requests were granted. Under these disastrous circumstances, I have done what I can to execute your wishes. I have put Mr. Henry Smith's name down on the list of Lord Shoveastarne, and in the course of a year or two I hope I shall be able, if her Majesty's Government continue in office, to give you a favourable report as to the chance of that young gentleman's getting afloat. I'm sure I need not tell you, Lady D'Auberville, how thankful we feel to you at this board, for dedicating to the service of the country any young gentleman of such promise as to have attained the high honour of exciting an interest in the breast of such a distinguished patroness.

"I have the honour to remain,
"Dear Lady D'Auberville,
"With the most profound admiration and respect,
"Your most obedient and very humble servant,
"ZALTPROG."

When Lady D'Auberville read this reply, her brow darkened. Tearing up the letter into shreds, she threw it into the fire place, exclaiming, "How very provoking!—five-and-twenty guineas thrown away. I shall make a note of his conduct to Shuffle Palm. Two years! Goodness knows what mischief might be done in two years." Lady D'Auberville walked to the end of the drawing-room which looked out into the flower-garden, and there—could it be possible, or did her eyes deceive her?—just within the shelter of an exquisite terrace of myrtle, she beheld the beautiful Gwinnethlyn placing in the button-hole of Totty a little bouquet of one or two flowers, which she had evidently just gathered for him; while, as the young couple were thus engaged, their eyes were fixed on one another with a tenderness and delight that, while it had absorbed them too deeply to think of their being overlooked, filled the breast of the prudent mother with alarm.

"What can I do with this provoking boy? I cannot endure this state of things. And to think of my being in the country too, where they will be thrown together from morning till

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night. What is to be done? Two years! If this be the ill-conducted state of affairs in the navy, of what use, I should like to know, is it that we keep a navy afloat, when people of condition can't put their young people into it without waiting for vacancies indeed?"

At this moment it occurred to Lady Charlotte D'Auberville, "Can that Lord Zaltprog be deceiving me? Surely I have seen advertisements for midshipmen." Going to the bell to summon the groom of the chambers, "Carne, tell Miss D'Auberville to come to me directly; she is in the flower-garden, I think."

In a few moments Gwinnethlyn came running to her mother. "What is it you want of me, dear Bu'?" putting her arms around Lady Charlotte's neck, and looking more like a Hebe from the brighter realms of classical Olympus than a mere daughter of this dull earth.

"Oh, my dear child, do be more steady. When will you give over these girlish habits, kissing and pulling one about in this hoydenish manner?"

"Well, my dear Bu'," said Gwinnethlyn, "when I love you less, I will be more respectful, indeed I will. Now stop, don't reproach me;" and putting her fingers on her mother's lips, Lady Charlotte, despite of herself, was obliged to be a little less affected.

"Gwinnethlyn, I want you to go down to the library and bring me up to-day's *Times*."

"Oh, yes, ma, I will bring it you directly; Harry has taken it out to my bower."

"Harry again," repeated Lady Charlotte, with disgust; "this shall not last long."

In a few minutes the *Times* was brought to Lady D'Auberville, and, casting her eye down its columns, she saw several advertisements from the leading ship-owners in the city, and in one of them that paragraph so often seen: "There are a few midshipmen's vacancies left on board this first-class ship. Apply to W. S. Lindsay & Co., 8, Austin Friars, London."

Having made a memorandum of this address, the bell was once more rung, and on the appearance of Carne, "Tell the

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butler to have everything ready for London. I go by the train to-morrow morning at eleven o'clock."

"Which carriage will your ladyship take?"

"The britska and grey horses. Tell Miss Watson and my waiting-woman to come to me directly."

These two functionaries having made their appearance without any loss of time, to the astonishment of the whole household, the requisite orders were given.

Miss Watson indited a few lines to the landlord of the Clarendon, to find rooms in his own house or some other hotel, and to order dinner the following day, for four covers, at six o'clock.

Punctual to the time, no accident having happened, Lady D'Auberville and her family sat down in the gilded dining-room of the Clarendon at the hour named. Little imagining what was passing in the mind of the politic mother, Gwinnethlyn and Totty were delighted at the change, fondly imagining that they were to enjoy one another's society for the next fortnight, seeing all those sights in London with which young minds are so much charmed.

This delusion, however, was speedily dispelled.

Breakfast was no sooner cleared away on the following morning than Lady Charlotte proceeded to divide the youthful pair to the best of her ability.

"Gwinnethlyn, my dear, I fear you have been greatly neglected lately. I have made an appointment for you to go with Miss Watson in half-an-hour"—forth came her ladyship's watch —"in half-an-hour to Cartwright."

"Oh, my dear Bu'—"

"Now, my dear Gwinnethlyn, not a word. You know Mr. Cartwright is a person of consideration and position, and we could not possibly break an appointment made with him. In half-an-hour, Miss Watson, you will be there. Now, my dear, go away and get ready at once. My dear Harry," turning to her intended victim with all the languor and tenderness of a person devotedly attached to him, "I think you want a few new clothes: it is time for you to leave off jackets, I think, and take to some dress a little more manly. I want you

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to escort me into the City on a little business. Go away and get your hat and gloves, the carriage will be at the door in the course of ten minutes. Miss Watson, as you pass to your room, tell one of the men to request the landlord to come to me."

With looks of sad disappointment, the other members of Lady Charlotte's family immediately disappeared. They paused for a moment in the old-fashioned and somewhat gloomy hall of the Clarendon to send the message to the landlord, and then, hurrying upstairs, proceeded to array themselves for the carriage.

Duly marshalled between two footmen, the landlord of the hotel knocked at Lady Charlotte's door, and, having heard a summons to enter, presented himself with a smile whose blandness was almost equal to that of Lady Charlotte's. He was a little slightly formed man of gentlemanly exterior, with large grey eyes, and teeth strongly marked.

"I hope, Lady Charlotte, you passed the night agreeably and to your satisfaction?"

"Everything—extremely obliged to you, Mr. Wright. I wish you to tell me if you ever heard of such a place in London as Austin Friars?"

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Wright. "It is a well-known place of business in the City."

"Ah! the City. Let me see—I know—that is some place I have heard of—the City."

"Very possibly, Lady Charlotte. The City, technically speaking, is understood to commence on the eastern side of Temple Bar and to extend eastward."

"Oh, dear me! Temple Bar, that name seems familiar to me."

"Oh, yes, Lady Charlotte; Temple Bar lies a little to the west of Chancery-lane."

"Dear me, Chancery-lane! Oh, that is where all those horrid letters were dated from, with which I was so bored for fifteen years in a suit against my trustees. Must I go past that dreadful place?"

"I think, Lady Charlotte, you must go past either the north or the south end of Chancery-lane in going to the City."

"Dear me, that is where all those odious lawyers live! Do you think I could reach Austin Friars with safety?"

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"Yes, Lady Charlotte; I don't apprehend any difficulty in your reaching Austin Friars with safety."

"But my carriage—I suppose the panels will be all dashed to pieces? I am told there is always a horrid bustle in that part of London."

"Why, certainly there is an amount of pressure of business; but if your ladyship will allow me to substitute one of my carriages for your britska—"

"Ah! there is a good creature, do send me one of your carriages; you know you don't care about a broken panel; perhaps you job?"

"Sometimes, Lady Charlotte."

"Ah, it is the best plan in London; but, you know, a broken panel would be very disagreeable to me because I am going to the country, and I might be detained in London to have it repaired. Yes, let me have one of your carriages to the door immediately. Oh, Mr. Wright, let me have something for dinner at seven o'clock this evening."

"Is there anything your ladyship would like?"

"No, nothing. A little fish, a few chickens, and any game that will be in season, and a—a—yes—a—a—a little green pea soup."

"Any particular wine, my lady?"

"No—no. A little chablis in ice; nothing more."

A profound bow followed from the landlord, and Lady Charlotte was once more left alone.

"Dear me, I have forgotten." Once more the bell was pulled. The landlord imagined what the case was.

"Has your ladyship forgotten anything?"

"Yes, dear me, Mr. Wright, one of the principal things I wanted to send to you for. I want to call on some person in Austin Friars, a firm of W. S. Lindsay and Co."

"Well, my lady, he is a well-known merchant in the City. I believe one of the richest and most rising men we have there."

"He is a person of some little position, then, among those mercantile people?"

"Oh, yes, Lady Charlotte, I believe a very well-known per-

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son indeed; he has a large amount of shipping, and is well-known in the shipping-trade."

"That is all, Mr. Wright, thank you. Good morning."

In a few moments Totty and Gwinnethlyn were effectually divided; and, while the beautiful little love went off to Cartwright to excite his admiration for a most faultless display of pearls, that almost seemed to say they would never require his care or attention, Lady Charlotte rolled along in a brougham and pair for that unknown desert of her topography, the city of London.

After innumerable exclamations and shrieks that she was going to be run over, run into, upset, &c. &c., Lady Charlotte, protesting that she had never been in such a horrid den in her life, was ushered into the spacious hall of the rising ship-owner, which, fitted up with French-polished mahogany in every direction, had witnessed the downfall of one of England's most celebrated firms—Cockerill, Larpent, and Co.—and the rise of another, W. S. Lindsay and Co.

Having inquired for the head of the firm, Lady Charlotte was ushered into a little back office, hung round with oil sketches of various ships, and lighted by a skylight looking to the west, but considerably overshadowed by the tall brick houses that flanked it.

"Young gentleman, will you be kind enough to tell Mr. Lindsay that Lady Charlotte D'Auberville waits to see him?" said her ladyship, addressing, as she thought, one of the young clerks of the office.

The party addressed closed the door behind him, and, with a slight smile, said, "My name is Lindsay, Lady Charlotte; what can I do for you? Will you not take a chair?"

Lady Charlotte was so astonished at finding the great ship-owner a young man, considerably on the junior side of forty, that, with all her ready command of countenance, a little colour rose to her cheek at the mistake she had made. No one covered her retreat with better grace than Lady Charlotte.

"Thank you, Mr. Lindsay," she said, seating herself in the capacious, well-stuffed, but iron chair to which she was motioned "It is so seldom in England that a gentleman

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arrives at any position in the world at your age, you must pardon an old woman for her mistake."

"It is a pleasant mistake to be made the subject of, Lady Charlotte. You are come to place this young man with me," said he, with a slight Scottish accent, instantly divining what it was that brought her.

Lady Charlotte seemed surprised at being thus quickly read. "Ah, Mr. Lindsay, I see how you have got on. You are right. I saw an advertisement of yours in the paper, and this young gentleman, who is a ward of mine, is anxious to see a little of the world afloat; he is very fond, Mr. Lindsay, of ships and sailing; and as youth at his time of life is too precious to be wasted—"

"There is nothing so valuable as time—you are right, Lady Charlotte," said Lindsay, slipping in a reply. "There is nothing so precious in the world as time; and, young laddie, let me tell you this," laying his hand upon Totty's shoulder, "if you don't make the best use of time, you can never properly make the best of work; and the only way to get forward in the world, in your day or mine, is work! work! work!"

Lady Charlotte kept her eye fixed on Lindsay as he was addressing Totty; and, as she looked, it was with the inquiring gaze of a woman who seemed to feel that she was out-manœuvred by that young and slender looking man, who, with his slight form, wide shoulders, dark countenance, and short curly hair just gathered into a sort of time lock into the middle of a large round forehead, excited Lady Charlotte's admiration, as the personification of that energy and industry that had put together the means of a vast fortune at a time when most men are only beginning to dream of their future. "I was going to tell you, Mr. Lindsay," said Lady Charlotte, "that I have some friends at the Admiralty who have put my ward's name down for a vacancy on board one of the Queen's ships, and that I have a friend a lord of the Admiralty."

"Oh, but they'll keep you waiting a couple of years, Lady Charlotte, before you get it."

"Precisely, Mr. Lindsay; that was my very objection."

"And at the end of eight years, perhaps, they will condescend

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to make your ward a lieutenant, if he have very great interest, and he will just get pay enough, perhaps, to clear his tailor's bill. He will then waste three or four years of his life on shore applying for a fresh appointment, and get heavily in debt for his next outfit; and, possibly, when he is forty, and passed all work, he may retire upon half-pay as a post-captain, with something under £200 a-year—just enough to starve on. Whereas, laddie, do you see, if you enter the commercial navy, and work hard, which you will do if you have any Scotch blood in you, you may do as I did—command a ship by the time you are nineteen; and that is like getting up early in the morning, with the rest of your life clear before you."

"Did you indeed, Mr. Lindsay? Is it possible that you commanded a ship at nineteen years of age?"

"It's not only possible, but it is possibly true, Lady Charlotte; and, what is more, I commenced the world just barely five years before that, with three shillings and sixpence in my pocket."

"Dear me, do you hear that, Henry? What a splendid career there is before you!"

"When do you want him to go afloat, Lady Charlotte?"

"Ah, that was the point I wanted to ask you. I must—peculiar circumstances, family arrangements, require me to leave England for the Continent immediately, and I wish to see him off before I leave town. Would next week suit you, Mr. Lindsay?"

"I am sorry to say I yesterday filled up the last vacancy I had; but I can give you a note to a friend of mine, who I know has several still open, Malcolm Monteith."

"Malcolm Monteith, Mr. Lindsay—who is this Malcolm Monteith?"

"He is just a Scotchman like myself," said Mr. Lindsay, "who will be happy to do a kind turn to your ladyship or any one else. A worthier fellow than Malcolm Monteith I don't know in London, and there is no man more respected, Lady Charlotte, in the City. I am often quoted as the largest shipowner in the world, but that is not true, because that includes a great many ships in which I have only shares. The largest

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ship-owner in the world, Lady Charlotte, is Malcolm Monteith, for he stands alone by himself. All the ships are his own, and nobody else has any share in them. There," said Lindsay, filling up a note which he had hastily written, "you will find my friend Malcolm as good a fellow as you will find again in a hurry, Lady Charlotte; and, if you want to make a conquest of a rich old bachelor, who has been remarkably good-looking in his day, I leave Malcolm Monteith to acknowledge your ladyship's charms. I am very sorry to be obliged to run away; for one of the Ministers has written to make an appointment to go over a ship of mine in ten minutes' time."

"Is this really so, Mr. Lindsay? Is not this one of your City *ruses?* Who is the Minister?"

"Well, Lady Charlotte, I suppose it is a lady's privilege to doubt, and to ask questions, so you must be pardoned and answered. It is Lord Granville."

"Oh, Lord Granville, he is an intimate friend of mine. I always used to think he waltzed better almost than any partner I danced with. Just give him my name, and I know he will forgive you your being a little over time; and, if he had been a few inches taller, I should have said he was one of the best waltzers I ever danced with. You must not run away in this horrid manner, Mr. Lindsay—I cannot spare you; I have fifty questions to ask you."

"I will answer three for your ladyship. Now, the first one?"

"What age ought a boy to be to enter the commercial navy?"

"Well, it does not so much depend upon his age as his size and intelligence; any age above nine and under thirteen; that boy is quite big enough, and quite intelligent enough."

"How do you know he is intelligent enough, Mr. Lindsay?"

"Because he bears such a striking likeness to Lady Charlotte D'Auberville. Now, you must admit, for a Scotchman that is a large amount of compliment. Let me show you to your carriage, Lady Charlotte, and any other day all your questions shall be answered."

Lady D'Auberville bit her lip when this gallant speech of the London merchant was made, for, handsome as she thought

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Harry, she thought still more of her own charms, and could not endure to be likened to that odious sweep-boy, though W. S. Lindsay, well known as he was himself, could not have known this; and seeing that he was bent upon keeping his appointment, and was, moreover, accustomed to shorten ladies' visits on similar errands, she allowed herself to be handed into her carriage, while Mr. Lindsay gave the directions to her coachman where to drive, and off they went to seek out Malcolm Monteith.

On arriving at the bachelor's office, the celebrated Malcolm was not at home; "but," said the clerk who held Lady Charlotte's card in his hand, "I know where he is to be found, madam, and, if your ladyship wishes it, I'll send for him."

"If you please," said Lady Charlotte; and in a few minutes the clerk returned with the person whom he sought.

If Lady Charlotte had desired to see a strong contrast, she could not have asked for one greater than that between Malcolm Monteith and W. S. Lindsay. Malcolm entered with Lady Charlotte's card in his hand, and, immediately taking off his hat, made her a low bow.

Mr. Monteith, instead of being rather under the middle height, stood nearly six feet; and it is not too much to say that, if he had been carved with as much skill as he occasionally bestowed on a Norfolk turkey, he might have been cut up into at least four Lindsays, so capacious was the great shipowner in the herculean proportion of his form.

In age he was certainly the elder brother, and might possibly have been the father of such a man as Lindsay; but still—with his fine bold, handsome countenance redolent with good humour and intelligence, surrounded by flowing curly locks tinged with grey, and that fine capacious roll of auburn whiskers which ladies are not altogether displeased to see on the masculine countenance—he retained some of the charms of youth.

Like Lindsay, Monteith also retained in his dialect some traces of his Scotch descent.

"I have called to present you with this note from your friend Mr. Lindsay," said Lady Charlotte.

Monteith received the note, but, it must be confessed, he was

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much more attentive in reading the countenance of the handsome and titled widow. There was a certain amount of fun in his eye, which proclaimed in a glance a great admirer of the sex. A single moment sufficed to read Lindsay's lines.

"It will give me great pleasure, Lady Charlotte, to execute any commands that you can lay upon me. Come here, my boy," said Monteith, extending his broad palm to Totty; "do you wish to become a little officer of mine?"

"If you please, sir," said Totty.

"I was anxious, Mr. Monteith, that my ward, Mr. Henry Smith, should see a little of the world, more than is to be learnt at mere schools and colleges."

"Your ladyship is right," said Monteith; "the world is getting a little beyond the leading-strings of the Latin grammar, and I honour your ladyship for your discrimination, in thinking that a sounder college for an Englishman is to be found on board the planks of one of old Britain's bulwarks than at the desk or bench of the best dominie of them a'. When did your ladyship wish this young gentleman to sail?"

"That was the very point, Mr. Monteith, on which I came to you. As I told your friend Mr. Lindsay, Lord Zaltprog—who, as you know, is one of the junior lords—has been good enough to put down this young gentleman's name at the Admiralty; but I find that such is the abominable practice which has grown up from the radical tendencies of the present age, that persons of condition now, instead of always being able to place their children in the navy, have to wait for a vacancy."

"Well, Lady Charlotte, it is very hard—is it not?—that one cannot use the public service as one's own."

"Precisely, Mr. Monteith; it is extremely unprincipled, and I think that this is one of the signs of the state of revolution to which we are rapidly converging. I remember, Mr. Monteith, when one of my brothers expressed an inclination to go to sea, Lord Melville, who was then the presiding spirit of the Admiralty, had his name borne on the books of one of the great ships soon after he was five years old; and I remember perfectly well that, by the time he was ready to enter the navy at thirteen, he had passed a considerable portion of his time

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afloat, while he was still at school at Harrow; but those constitutional privileges, I found, are all swept away by the modern march of innovation."

"Ah!" said Monteith. "Did Mr. Lindsay mention to your ladyship what are the terms required of all my young midshipmen?"

"Oh, no, Mr. Monteith, he did not name them—that was quite unnecessary; anything that you think right."

"Precisely, Lady Charlotte; but we men of business in the City always think it better that these things should be known, and then there can be no mistake afterwards. I have a ship which is going to sea next week. You can easily get this young man's outfit ready in time, and then you will have to allow him something under eighty pounds a-year for the first two or three years; and after that, I have no doubt, he will rapidly make his own way, and be a burden to nobody."

"Eighty pounds a-year!" repeated her ladyship. "Dear me, is it so expensive?"

"Well, after all, can you call it expensive? I dare say your ladyship gives as much as that to your house-steward, besides liveries and his board."

"Oh, yes, Mr. Monteith; but my house-steward is—"

"A house-steward, Lady Charlotte; and I don't see you can make anything more of him. We lay down one rule for all the young gentlemen we take on board, and that is the sum we find requisite, and we never vary it."

"Well, well, if that is the sum that they all pay, of course I have nothing to say. Who would you recommend, Mr. Monteith, for his outfit and uniform? I suppose he has an uniform?"

"Oh, yes, they all have uniforms. I think you cannot go to a better person than Silver, of Cornhill. Will your ladyship decide at once, because I will ring, and order the necessary memoranda to be made?"

"Yes," said Lady Charlotte, "if you are quite certain your ship sails next week. I think no time is to be lost."

"Oh, yes, next week for the Baltic, the *Agamemnon*—a very fine craft of eight hundred tons."

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"Would that suit you, my dear?" said Lady Charlotte, condescending for the first time to turn to poor Totty, whose fate once more appeared to be, to have his destiny thus summarily disposed of, without the least reference to what might have been his own feelings.

Poor Totty was anxious to enjoy all those charms of life which Lady Charlotte had so glowingly depicted; but, to be sent off thus summarily, was a little more than even he had calculated for.

"Must I go, Lady Charlotte, before my holidays are over?" said Totty.

"Holidays, my dear child!" said Lady Charlotte, drawing him aside, so that Malcolm could not hear this egregious statement. "When you are once on board a ship, it is all holiday. Don't you know that sailors have nothing to do but let the wind blow them from one pleasant place to another? It would be a thousand pities, now that this beautiful ship is all ready, that you should be disappointed of the opportunity; and so easy at once to order your beautiful uniform, you know. I think, my dear, I had better say you will go." Then, as poor Totty hung his head to hide the tears that were starting to his eyes, Lady Charlotte turned round, and said, "Well, then, Mr. Monteith, it is decided on. I will go at once to Mr. Silver and order the uniform, if you will give me a note, and I myself will see my dear boy on board. Any other communications you may have to make me, if you will send them to the Clarendon Hotel, in Bond-street—"

"Very well, Lady Charlotte," said Monteith, "I will make a memorandum of your address, and here is the note to Silver. Your ladyship will excuse me running away, but I've got to go and attend a board meeting at the Marine Board to-day, and I am already a little past the hour. Your ladyship will always find me at home at ten o'clock, and you may rely on my having every attention paid to your young friend that lies in my power."

Malcolm Monteith then handed Lady Charlotte to her carriage, and, while she drove off to Silver's and had Totty measured for his outfit, Malcolm Monteith hurried off to discharge the usual host of matters requiring his attention.

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CHAPTER XXXVI.

WHERE is the heart that, referring to its youthful hours, cannot recall time, place, date, and all the attendant feelings of some separation quite as sorrowful and quite as sudden as that which awaited Gwinnethlyn and Totty, thanks to the forecasting prudence of the worldly Lady Charlotte? Where is the heart that does not yet bear in its innermost recesses some traces of those pangs which its sweetest and its tenderest hopes have known—that lot of life which seems in turn to be presented to all of the race of Adam, to love and yet to part? That lot was experienced in its full force by these two young creatures; and although at the age of which we speak the affection that existed between them was that simply of two children intensely attached to one another by strong sympathies of age, pursuit, and disposition, still it did not the less for all that produce the liveliest sorrow. In their case, as in the case of most others, the only alleviation to these pangs was that brought by time. Days, weeks, months, years rolled away, and still Lady Charlotte determined to keep them severed; and in the pursuit of that determination, as she had ample power, she had perfect success. As far as in her lay she endeavoured also to suppress all correspondence between the two young people. Still, every now and then, Gwinnethlyn, partly by coaxing, partly by a little innocent artifice, would contrive to get hold of one of Totty's letters. With great delight she watched him rise gradually from one post to another until he was quite independent of Lady Charlotte's assistance, and on more than one occasion the presents which he perpetually sent her at last contrived to reach her hands. During all this time the scheming mother not only kept out of her daughter's sight the young man for whom she entertained so great a dread, but she was incessant in her manœuvres to throw Gwinnethlyn into the society of those who would effectually put it out of Totty's power to give her any more uneasiness.

At last Gwinnethlyn attained her nineteenth birthday, an

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she had already refused two most unexceptionable offers, and treated with what her mother called "very great levity" the approaches of a third suitor; while lovelorn swains without number sighed and fluttered around her, never seeming for a moment to excite her slightest regard. In vain her mother stormed, shammed, cried, used her utmost blandishments, looked her tenderest glances, and wore her most captivating smiles. In vain she opened every letter of her daughter she could lay her hands on, and perpetually tormented her with questions for her reasons for refusing such very advantageous proposals time after time.

Though no explanation had ever passed between mother and daughter, they both understood one another thoroughly. Gwinnethlyn was as clear in judgment as she was lovely in person. The only explanation that her mother could ever obtain from her was, that she did not like the young viscount, and she had no regard for his rival the young earl; while Lady Charlotte mourned over her daughter's proceedings to her confidential crony, Lady Mumble.

"I cannot help having very great suspicion that that odious sweep-boy is still running in her head, though they have never met for years, and never shall again if I can help it."

"Where is he now, my dear Lady Charlotte?" said Lady Mumble.

"Well, I'm happy to say he is first mate of some ship trading in the Baltic; and I got a letter this morning from the captain to say that he was taken ill of a fever at Cronstadt, and left behind there sick in hospital, and, if I have any luck at all, I do really begin to hope now that I shall get rid of him. To think, my dear Lady Mumble, what a victim I have been made by that Lord Diamond and my silly child together, all these years. I do assure you, Lady Mumble, I have never had a moment's peace."

"Oh, my dear Lady Charlotte, I can quite enter into your feelings as a mother, with such a marriageable daughter."

"Marriageable! My dear Lady Mumble, my daughter ought to command the best match in England, whoever it may be. You know my detestable relative, Lord Hardheart, has no child.

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You know that boy of his never appeared again. All Lord Hardheart's efforts to trace him were perfectly vain, and I have no doubt he is dead and buried long ago."

"Oh, of course; and very proper he should be, to be sure."

"Well, then, my dear, just consider; my daughter must come to the title and all the estates, and they are every one of them entailed. Lord Hardheart began to cut down the timber, but I very soon stopped him at that."

"Did you, my dear? How did you manage to stop him? He is the most overbearing, disagreeable brute; though forgive me, my dear, for saying so, for he is your blood. How did you stop him? I should as soon have thought of stopping a mad bull."

"Oh, my dear, you might stop a mad bull directly if you had only time to do what I did."

"What is that?"

"Get an injunction from the Court of Chancery, and serve it upon him."

"Yes, my dear, yes—yes; but then, as my dear old admiral used to say, that would be a very 'dangerous service,' my dear Lady Charlotte. And so you really got an injunction against the marquis?"

"To be sure I did. He began cutting down the timber—let me see—about two years ago, when he found there was no hope of his son turning up; but I took the opinion of one or two Chancery counsel, and found that he was only tenant for life, with impeachment for waste, as they call it, and they gave me an injunction directly. Why, my dear Lady Mumble, I am told there is nearly £80,000 worth of timber on the estates."

"What a thing it would have been if that horrid marquis had had it all cut down, as I have no doubt he intended to do! and what would Gwinnethlyn have done without her timber? Oh, horrid! horrid! it would have been impossible to live in the place, you know."

"Well, then, I say a girl of her position, sure of the title, and sure of the estates, ought to command any match in the kingdom, to say nothing of her beauty, which, I flatter myself, is hereditary, my dear Lady Mumble."

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"Oh, quite so, my dear. And so this young man is dying in Russia—what is the name of the place?"

"Cronstadt is the name of the place; I hope he is not dying yet."

"Why not, my dear?"

"Because I hope he is dead. He is really the greatest torment I have. The creature will be constantly sending home letters, and dresses, and presents, and I have to keep a perfect cordon round my house to keep them out of Gwinnethlyn's way."

"Oh, it is very provoking to be pestered with presents in that way."

"Why, my dear, if they come to one's-self, one could get over it; but presents to one's daughter is really much too bad from a young man who has no sort of expectations."

Kind and humane as Lady Charlotte's aspirations were, the ground on which they were founded was unfortunately too true. The same day that witnessed Gwinnethlyn's twentieth birthday witnessed the sailing of poor Eustatius' ship from the port of Cronstadt, whither it had been to convey a marine boiler for the Emperor of Russia. While the ship lay in harbour, one of the men fell overboard, and Eustatius, jumping overboard to save his life, returned to his duty, and continued not only to work in his wet clothes, but in the hurry of duty sat down to his dinner without changing them. The following morning it was evident to all on board that he was in a high fever; and the captain, who was his stanch friend, insisted on taking lodgings for him, and placing him under medical treatment, while he left the port of Cronstadt, as he imagined, for a few days, to go up to St. Petersburgh, and ship the household effects of some merchant, anxious to leave the imperial city before the breaking out of that war between Russia and England which had already become imminent.

At St. Petersburgh events arose over which the captain could exercise no control. He was obliged to expedite his departure for England with great haste, and, having a fair wind, sailed past Cronstadt without calling for his first mate, not thinking it of any very great consequence, and fully intending, by the first

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vessel that he might hail going into that port, to send Eustatius written instructions and supplies. This he accordingly did, but the letter never reached the hand for which it was intended; and when our hero was sufficiently recovered from his sick bed to consider the position in which he was placed, he found himself in a Russian port of which he knew nothing, and war with England close at hand—no friends, no money, no means of helping himself appearing at hand. As the greater part of his time had been spent in ships trading to Russian ports, he was, of course, quite familiar with the Russian language. Thinking that he must be sure to find some of his countrymen still remaining in the Czar's dominions, he made the necessary inquiries, but found that almost every one had taken flight except a Scotch engineer, who had been for some time superintending works for the Czar, and who still remained at his post. "Well," thought Eustatius, "it is quite clear after all that no war can be very close at hand, for this man must, from his position, have access to the best information; and, if he remains behind, it must be from the conviction that the war will not break out, so I shall make myself pretty easy on that score; and as he is a Scotchman, and an engineer, he must have heard of my old friend James Skilsmyth. I will call upon him, and mention Skilsmyth's name."

Accordingly, Eustatius found out the Scotchman's residence; and, having sent in his card, was admitted to his presence.

"I have taken the liberty of calling on you, Mr. McAllister," said Eustatius, "to ask your advice under the difficult circumstances in which I am placed; and though I have not the honour of being known to you, yet, as a friend of your fellow-countryman and brother engineer, James Skilsmyth—"

"Skilsmyth," said McAllister, interrupting him, "are you indeed a friend of young Skilsmyth? Ah, I knew his auld father well; mony a crack in Edinburgh have I and Alexander Skilsmyth had together. He was a clever auld body, was that Alexander Skilsmyth. I have one of his pictures of Edinburgh hanging upstairs in my drawing-room at this very day. And so you are a friend of his son James? It is a vera splendid idea, that of his steam-hammer; it is just one of those inven

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tions that everybody must have felt the necessity of that ever saw a blacksmith at work; and yet, when James put it into execution, everyone wondered he had never thought of the same simple idea. What is it I can do for ye, sir?"

"Well, sir, I came on shore from my ship, the *Rob Roy*, with an attack of fever, and I believe Captain Adam intended to call for me on his way back; but it is now six weeks since he sailed. I have not heard from him; I have no friends in this part of the world, of course; and though my pay is due on board, yet I have no means of drawing it, and I wanted to know if you would be kind enough to give me some little employment under you, and put me in the way of getting home to England?"

"Well, Mr. — What did you say your name was?"

"Harry Smith, sir, my name is."

"Well, Mr. Harry Smith, I see a very great difficulty in complying with one of your requests. 'Tis vera true we are now busy for the Emperor, strengthening the defences of Cronstadt; but you see our men are all Russian, and I suppose you know as much about Russian as you do of the language of the moon."

"If I knew as much of the language of the moon as I do of the Russian, perhaps I might tell you a thing or two that would astonish you," said Eustatius, suddenly changing the English for the Russian dialect.

"Hoot, man!" said the engineer once or twice in surprise, "you've no learnt to speak the Russian in that way in six weeks?"

"No, sir," said Eustatius, returning to his own language. "I have traded to and fro from England to the Baltic for many years."

"Oh, vera well; in that case I can give you plenty of employment this very day. Something, I suppose, to do with batteries and ships will suit you best?"

"Yes, sir, certainly."

"Well, then, we are now busy enlarging one of the batteries on our sea-board side, and driving piles to do it. I can give you some employment, overlooking a gang of men who are at work there, if that will suit you."

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"Nothing better, sir, thank you; and if you will be kind enough to look out for some opportunity of getting me a berth in a ship bound for England, it will complete the measure of my obligation to you."

"Well, I can do that, certainly; but if you get good employment here, what for should you think of going back to England?"

"Why, sir, the rumour of war between Russia and our country grows so strong that I should not like to be surprised in this country by a declaration of war."

"Pray, why not?" said the engineer.

"Well, every man, I think, is bound to side with his own country. For instance, you would not hold your appointment a day after war broke out, would you?"

"Would I—why would I not? I can tell you I do not mean to give up my employment for any war between England and Russia. It is a mere weakness, and piece of twaddledum that we men preach among one another about our country. My appointments in Russia are worth three thousand a-year. I am an old man; and if I went over to England, do you think I should find my beautiful country there ready to give me three thousand a-year, to reward my patriotic sacrifices?"

"Well, no, sir, perhaps not; but still one always believes one's own country to be on the right side, and you do not wish to be engaged in any quarrel on the wrong side?"

"Hoot, sir! hoot, sir! you have a very great deal to learn in this matter. Do you think that, if England sends her fleet here with ten thousand men to fight against the Russians, that one man in a hundred in that fleet will trouble their heads to know or care one single toss of a farthing what the quarrel is, or who's right, or who's wrong? Don't you know that they will just go on fighting, Englishman against Russian, and tearing one another's hearts out with shell, shot, canister shot, grape, or any other devilment that might come to hand? and all because one set of men find themselves under a blue cross on a white field, and the other set of men find themselves under a red cross on a blue field. These are all ridiculous notions of a pack of fools, who do not choose to open their eyes to argue like common-sense people."

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"Well, sir, what is the argument of a common-sense person? Really, at present, these notions appear to me to be quite valid."

"What you may think valid notions, Mr. Harry Smith, I have nothing to do with; but as far as I am concerned, if the Emperor makes me offers which I think are proportionate to the extremity of any risk I may run, I shall just stay here and naturalise myself as a Russian, and fight it out on the side where I find I am placed; and if any of those ragamuffin rascals who call themselves my countrymen come up here in the English fleet, you may depend upon it, if I am engineer here, I will do my best to sink them if I am able."

"Well, but, Mr. McAllister, they would hang you when they took you."

"Aye, laddie, when they take me they may do what they like with me, for I shall not be able to help it; but it will be a long time before they get hold of Cronstadt, my boy."

"Well, but, sir, supposing that even they do not get hold of Cronstadt, do you not think it is a shocking thing to fire on your own countrymen, who, after all, are only assisting the oppressed against the oppressor?"

"Hoot, mon, haud your tongue, or learn to talk a little sense," said the tall, gaunt Scotchman, rousing himself up from his chair, and holding up his forefinger with great animation. "It is a shocking thing to fire a shot upon any person, whether it is your ain countryman or not; and, as to the oppressor and the oppressed, don't talk such twaddle and nonsense to me, boy. It has nae more to do with this question than auld Sandy Farquharson, the town-crier o' Aberdeen. You see, the focts of the case," speaking broad Scotch in his energy—"the focts of the case are joost these. The Emperor o' Russia is a king uncontrolled—a' kings that ever I read of are just fond of getting hold of every other man's property as well as their own. He has long had his eye upon Turkey, and he thinks the time has now come that he can get it; and if he can get it he will get it, and the weaker he finds the Turks the more he will try to get it. But the English, you see, are no kings, but a constitutional government; and a' the constitutional governments that ever I heard of, are aye trying to juggle and cajole every

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other state out of all the power and profit they can possibly get, and, having gotten it, to keep it, mon. Now, the English see, that if the Emperor of Russia seizes on Turkey, he will hae Constantinople. If he hae Constantinople, he has nae end of ships, and materials to build them—he has nae end of men to man them, and all that he wants now is sea-room to make them sailors. Once let him get Constantinople, and he will cover the whole Mediterranean, and in twenty years' time Russia will be a first-rate maritime power, as far as the seas go; and, as far as land goes, her armies would menace from Constantinople to Vienna on the one side, and then across the Dardanelles to Smyrna, Aleppo, Persia, and India, on the other side. Once let the great giant of northern barbarism expand itself under a warm climate, then what becomes of little England? It is just the auld game of 'pull devil pull baker'—power and lawlessness on the part of Russia, and commerce and selfishness on the part of Britain. Neither one nor the other, mon, care a snap of the little finger for a' the Turks in Christendom, and I cannot draw the least distinction between them. Such twaddle may be all very well for the gude wife at hame; but they will not take in an auld Scotchman, who happens in Cronstadt to have his bread buttered on both sides, and means to keep it. As to the oppressor and the oppressed, boy, if you want to get rid of such nonsense as that, just turn to the file of the *Times* journal—it is in my office below stairs—and you will find, only a few weeks back, a speech from the Earl of Shaftesbury, in the House of Lords, in London, in which he tells their lordships that the good people of England, in this very year, 1854, and at this very hour, are buying and selling bairns like very slaves, at five shillings per head, to go climbing up chimneys—a work that could be infinitely better done by a few rods of malacca cane, and a few strips of whalebone, or even with a common holly-bush and a round dumpy of lead, which I hae used often in puir auld Scotland mysel'; and for this purpose these poor bairns are now being boiled alive, roasted alive, smothered alive, and this chiefly done for the sake of sweeping the houses of magistrates, and peers, and noblemen, and mill-owners, all people of wealth and power, who should

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be the first to set a good example. Now, does it not appear to you, Mr. Harry Smith, that if the talk of the English people about the oppressor and oppressed was anything better than the worst o' lies and twaddle, that they would interfere between one another, and protect the oppressed from the oppressor in their ain free country of England, before they set out with vast fleets and armies to protect the infidel Mussulman? Hoot, sir, if the war between England and Russia does break out—and I care nae one bawbee whether it breaks out or noo—it is a war of very purest selfishness on both sides, and I hope they will both pummell ane anither sair before they see the end o' it, like a set o' hypocritical rogues as they are, from the beginning to the end of them; the Russian crying out that he is fighting for religion, and the Englishman crying out that he is fighting for the oppressed. These are lies, a' lies. Meanwhile, do you see, Mr. Harry Smith, the canny auld Scotchman will make his ain game, and laugh at both sides."

When McAllister quoted the pungent case in point of the brutalities which England sees with indifference in her own country, the colour mounted on the cheek of Totty; for he knew how truly McAllister had described the facts, and how cunningly the old Scotchman had laid bare the sore point in the English case.

"I must admit for once," said Eustatius, "that there is too much truth in your reproaches as to England; but surely France has taken up a bright and unsullied sword in this quarrel?"

"A bright and unsullied fiddlestick, young mon! Look at things with a keener eye. Is France, think you, the nation to buckle on arms against the oppressor for the oppressed?—France, that has not such a thing as a free and outspoken journal in the whole of her dominions, and does not dare to permit one—France, that uses the odious conscription to tear men from their families and sacrifice them in heaps before the cannon's mouth, whatever the quarrel may be, just or unjust, and whether it be to slaughter Russians at Cronstadt, or Frenchmen at Paris. And can France or England, or either one of them, talk of combating the oppressor against the oppressed, when they both, like a couple of big cowards as they were, stood quietly by and saw

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Russia, Austria, and Prussia plunder and tear in pieces unhappy Poland, and grow rich upon the spoils of a whole nation? and because neither England nor France were immediately interested in that unholy act of robbery, they neither of them had the pluck to wag a finger to stay the oppressor or to succour the oppressed. Hoot, sir! out upon such humbug, and out upon such hypocrites! If either man or nation come before me with an argument, it must be an argument which has some truth for its basis, and is supported by the lives and practice of those who produce it."

"Well, Mr. McAllister, I confess, as far as argument goes, I can say nothing against the overwhelming cases you have quoted; but still I hope you will not think me weak or foolish because I cannot go the length you propose of taking service with Russia the moment after she declares war against my country. You must entertain your opinions, and, of course, I have a perfect right to do the same; but I confess I would rather die of starvation in the streets of Cronstadt than serve Russia a moment after she declares war against my country."

"As to that, you do as you like. I shall do as I please. In the first place, war has not come yet, and when it comes it will be time enough to talk of it. When you are as old as I am, and have seen as much of those universal rascals mankind as I have, in every clime, and under every flag, you will come to very much the same opinion that I have arrived at. And now, sir, put your hat on, and I'll awa' with you and allot you out the work you will have to superintend."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

For some days Eustatius continued to discharge, with great pleasure to himself and with the approbation of Mr. McAllister, the duties which had been allotted to him, which were those of superintending various engineering works in which Mr. McAllister was then engaged, among which he beheld, with very

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great interest, the ingenious expedient to which recourse was had for the purpose of stopping the progress of the allied fleets up the narrow passage of Cronstadt, should the hour ever arrive for them to attempt the reduction of that place. Fully determined in his own mind to return to England on the first possible moment, he thought it was all fair to make various little plans, notes, and drawings on the sly of all the Russian fortifications, which he did by candle-light in the middle of the night, while his recollections of the day's labour were still fresh in his mind, and also by the first early blush of dawn before he was likely to be much observed. All those drawings, notes, and plans he carefully secreted in the crown of a new hat, and between the lining of some new clothes which he bought, apparently for the purpose of using as his best suit, but which he kept packed and locked in the trunk which he purchased, ready at a moment's notice to start for old England. Although McAllister had expressed thus strongly his own intention of preferring a sense of lucre to his sense of nationality, yet he did not seem to take any offence at Eustatius for refusing adherence to his principles. In all other matters he treated our hero very kindly. Owing to many of his own people having returned to Great Britain, he had been in want of an energetic and intelligent young man like Eustatius, who, from his knowledge of the Russian language, was particularly useful to him at this busy juncture.

One day, while Eustatius was busy carrying out the orders of his principal, a Polish aide-de-camp, apparently of high rank, came down to him and said that "a Russian officer connected with the fortress wished to speak to him in the presence of Mr. McAllister."

Eustatius having expressed his readiness to follow the aide-de-camp, away they went together, and landed at the casemated Fort Constantine.

After following the officer through various windings of the fortress, Eustatius found himself in the presence of the old Scotchman, who was leaning over a table explaining some engineering plan to a very tall and impassive-looking Russian officer who stood at the table on the other side, resting his

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ample forehead, just beginning to show the effect of time in its grey but curling hairs, on the fingers of his right hand.

The Russian did not look the Scotchman in the face, but remained stedfastly gazing out from the corners of his eyes at the plans of the fortifications laid before him, while the Scotchman, in the Russian language, was detailing the work from which Eustatius had been summoned.

As soon as the latter entered the room, "Here is the young Englishman," said McAllister. "Shall I leave the room?"

"No," said the Russian; then turning to the Pole, he added, "I will summon you when we want you."

In an instant the aide-de-camp vanished.

"How long is it since you were in England?" said the Russian officer, still speaking Russian, to Eustatius.

"About four months," answered our hero.

"There is some talk there of your going to war with our Emperor, is there not?"

"Yes," said Eustatius, "there is a good deal of talk about it in England, at present; but I think all the mass of the English people believe that their hopes may yet be realised, of avoiding the war."

"Why do they want to avoid the war? Are they not prepared for it?"

"Why, as to being prepared for it, it does happen very strangely that the English are better prepared for war now than they have ever been in any previous history of the kingdom."

"How can that be?"

"Well, it is a very singular coincidence which has led to it. For years there have been continual rumours of French invasions, and last year these rumours produced one direct result—the calling out of the militia, and a general preparation of the warlike stores of the country: that is one cause which has led to it; and another cause is, that ever since the introduction of steam, the newspaper-press has been insisting on the Government creating a steam-fleet in the navy, in order that France or any other nation might not take England unawares; and last year this resulted in the equipment of

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a very powerful steam-fleet at Spithead; so what with the militia and the armament on shore, and the steam-fleet at Spithead, one would almost fancy the Ministers had some private information of what might be brewing in the East; and in reality, under the semblance of peace, the English have been arming themselves as rapidly almost as if the war had been declared."

The brow of the Russian seemed to grow heavy with displeasure as these facts were narrated; and after a few minutes' pause, without looking up, and pretending to busy himself with the chart before him, he returned to the conversation by saying, "If the nation is so well prepared for war, why do they hope for peace?"

"Well, England is divided into several parties. There is a large religious party in England who think that all war is very wicked, and that slaughtering men with rifles and bayonets is the worst use to which you can put them; there is another, and still larger party in the country, who know that the moment war is declared all the peaceful operations of commerce are crippled and suspended. The funds immediately fall down; the consequence of that is, the manufacturer gets fewer orders. The merchant finds it more difficult to get returns; as a natural consequence, he hesitates profoundly in his ventures. The fund-holder is unable to sell out without incurring a peculiar loss; he immediately, therefore, demands a much higher per cent. on every mortgage, and possibly refuses to sell out on any terms, because no interest on any mortgage could repay him for the loss—he is crippled, therefore, in his operations, and obliged to receive three per cent. for his money while the builders who wish to build houses, the improving landowner wishing to drain his estate, the tradesmen who wish to embark more capital—all these parties are disappointed in the just prosecution of commercial enterprise. They suffer considerable loss; they very often have to part with their property at very great sacrifices; a general tightness of the money-market, as it is called, takes place; and the ruin of this, on those whose resources are at all hampered, very soon becomes observable. Then, again, in the country, the landlords are unable to get

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money lent on their estates; they draw in their expenses, and instead of going up to London to enter upon the enjoyments of the season, they either contract their expenditure when there, and so disappoint the general expectations of trade, or they remain quietly in their own homes to practise economy, and trade suffers in the country. The mere rumour of war produces a great many of all these consequences. In addition comes the burden of increased taxation, in order that the Minister may have the necessary command of means to keep fleets and armies; so that the English people, as a people, have many reasons for loving peace and detesting war; and if it were not that they are a very pugnacious and fighting people when once aroused, and that they have a high sense of national pride when anything is done to affront it, as well as a long-headed notion in being ready to protect any remote colonial interest, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to force them into war. Still, when six hundred Englishmen meet together in the House of Commons, an *esprit du corps* leads them to act rather with the spirit of their ancestors than the spirit of commerce; and however great their loss may be, they will certainly go to war rather than submit to what they think an injustice."

"You think, then, that they are likely to go to war in this matter, however great their loss may be?"

"Well, I should say they are certain to go to war if the Czar does not evacuate the Principalities. Their minds are quite made up on that point."

"Why?"

"Because, if they allow the Principalities to be occupied by Russia, it is the same in principle as their allowing Constantinople to be so occupied. Every Englishman feels that the one is a certain consequence of the other, and England would almost beggar herself before she would allow Russia to have Constantinople. Once firmly fixed there, it would be impossible to say what Russia would not achieve—not only in India, but in Europe—not only on land, but as a maritime power; and suppose, after Russia had been allowed to gain Constantinople, some future quarrels arise which should combine Russia and

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France in an invasion of England, she would then have to fight for her very existence, to achieve that which now she may achieve with comparative ease, and no personal danger at all."

"If England does go to war with Russia, what is it supposed in England she would be content with? The evacuation of the Principalities?"

"Certainly not! There is a large class in England who have long regarded the growing power of Russia with suspicion, confident that sooner or later the present quarrel must arise; and now that it has arisen, England will never rest content until she has drawn Russia's teeth for the future."

"How do you mean?—drawn Russia's teeth!" said the Russian officer, forgetting for a moment his reserve, dropping his right hand from his face, and glaring upon Eustatius with a countenance that in an instant struck the latter as very familiar to him, though he could not remember where he had seen it before.

"Why, what should I mean by drawing your teeth?" said Eustatius very coolly, "except that I should prevent your biting me for ever afterwards."

"And pray, sir, what are Russia's teeth?"

"Why, Sebastopol is one of her teeth—that is her dog-tooth. The Crimea is another of her teeth—that is a grinder. Those forts that lie in the Black Sea at the foot of the Caucasus, they are her incisors; and if Russia give England a chance, by allowing war to be declared between them, England will never drop the quarrel until she has seized the Caucasian forts, given them into the hands of the Georgians, and put Sebastopol most likely into the hands of the Turks, or, perhaps, let it be held by a mixed commission of French and English engineers. I call Cronstadt another of Russia's teeth; and if she is unwise enough to come to blows with France and England, I think both the latter will be very unlikely to rest until every stone of the fort we are standing in is level in the water, and the whole of Cronstadt in the same position."

"Pooh! pooh!" said the Russian officer, "you forget Cronstadt contains one of the finest fleets in the world."

"I do not forget it at all," said Eustatius. "It may be very fine on paper; but it will not dare to show its nose to France

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and England, or, if it does, it will be made fine by degrees, and beautifully less. I only wish the Czar knew what I could tell him about his fleets, he would not place much dependence upon them."

"And pray, sir, what can you tell him about his fleets?" said the Russian, again firing up, with the glance of a man accustomed to bear down all opposition.

"Well," said Eustatius, putting both his thumbs into the arm-holes of his waistcoat, and dropping himself into a chair that stood near him, while McAllister, the engineer, got behind the Russian officer, and began making very impatient dumb show, to signify that Eustatius should stand up again—a dumb show which Eustatius, although he beheld it, treated with perfect indifference. "What I should tell the Czar about his fleets, if I can only get a chance, will be this—they may be all very well to go and butcher a few Turks at an odds of ten to one; but I will back a good double-banked French or English frigate, not mounting more than fifty guns, to sink and destroy the best line-of-battle ship in the Cronstadt fleet, not mounting more than eighty guns, with any breeze, or under any circumstances that the Emperor may choose to stipulate for."

"Boys are always fond of boasting," said the Russian officer, "and it is very natural you should have this partiality for your countrymen; but just do me the favour to tell me why you entertain so poor an opinion of the Russian fleet?"

"I'll tell you what," said Eustatius, the colour mounting to his face. "I will do something very different from explaining unless you immediately withdraw the term of 'boasting,'" said Eustatius, starting from his chair, withdrawing his hand from the arm-holes of his waistcoat, and involuntarily closing his fist, with the air of a man who is going to pitch into another.

The Russian looked up to him for a moment somewhat amused, and McAllister in an instant started round as if to interpose; but the Russian, with the greatest *sangfroid*, just raised his right finger to stay McAllister's progress, and then looking towards Eustatius, said, "Did I use the term 'boasting?' I withdraw it, then. Now, go on. What is the reason you speak so disparagingly of the fleet of my countrymen?"

"I don't want to disparage them at all," said Eustatius, sink-

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ing back into his chair; "but I am sorry to see two great nations like England and Russia going to hammer one another like a couple of mad bulls, for no earthly purpose, as far as Russia is concerned, except that of getting very hard knocks. That Russia should try and get Turkey may be all fair enough, if the nations of Europe would let her; but now that it is quite clear they will let her do no such a thing, it is a manifest mistake on her side to attempt that by force which she could only have achieved by long watching and great cunning. With regard to the Russian fleet: I have been trading in the Baltic several years—the best part of my time I had for my captain a gentleman who was a lieutenant in the English royal navy in the only action in which the Russian fleet has been engaged. I suppose I heard from him a description of that engagement at least fifty times: there is scarcely a fact that took place in it of which I am not in possession; and if the Emperor of Russia only knew how his fleet behaved in that action, he would no more place reliance upon them than I should think of leaning upon a straw."

"What was the action?"

"Why, Navarino, of course."

"How did they behave?"

"Like a set of old washerwomen. When the signal was made to enter the Bay, they had contrived to get an hour's sail to leeward, so that the battle had been continuing for the best part of an hour before they could bring into action their fleet, which was the largest squadron of the three combined powers. Owing to this tremendous blunder, as they sailed into the Bay they had to receive the chance fire of the French, English, and Turks, and found every available point where their services could be useful already occupied; their four line-of-battle ships, therefore, could take up no proper berth, but had to run down into the middle of the Bay, and there oppose themselves to all the smaller craft of the enemy, where they were of little use, while two of the Russian frigates got foul of one another in the middle of the harbour. Their crews were said to be drunk: they only fired one shot throughout the whole of the action, and that shot killed an English midshipman."

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"Whoever gave such a report of the conduct of the Russian fleet must have propagated a gross libel; and if you doubt of the incorrectness of your informant, just take the trouble some day to refer to the despatch of your own admiral, Codrington, in which you will find the highest praise awarded to the Russian fleet."

"As to the despatches of admirals, they are like the despatches of diplomatists; you may look into them for anything but the truth, and that sometimes is very difficult to find. I am quite sure my captain would not willingly misinform me, for he had no motive for doing so; this account of the battle of Navarino I heard from him years before the difference between England and Russia; and as to the English admiral's account of the action, it is a generous practice with English admirals when a victory has been gained to bury and forget, as far as possible, all blunders and indiscretions of inferior officers. The Russian admiral was under the English admiral's command. When the victory of Navarino had been gained, where would have been the utility, on the part of the commander-in-chief, in declaring to the world that the Russian fleet might just as well have been in Cronstadt, and better too, for all the use they were to the Allies? It would only have looked like envy, and produced some very unpleasant feeling between the two Courts; and, to say nothing of the unfriendly nature of the act between two officers who were serving together, it would have been esteemed an unpardonable blunder on all sides; whereas, by paying a few empty compliments, nobody appeared to be hurt except the truth, and that is a gentleman whose personal feelings are never much regarded by great commanders. Besides, you have omitted in your calculation that the grateful Emperor Nicholas, Czar of all the Russias, created the English admiral knight of some indescribable saint or another, and sent the order and portrait in a snuff-box, and all three of them, for all I can tell, set in diamonds. There was every reason, therefore, why the English admiral should hush up the disgraceful conduct of the Russian fleet; but there is no reason whatever why a lieutenant of the navy, talking the matter privately over with a shipmate in his cabin, without the slightest motive of

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any kind to influence him, should tell a gross lie; and, therefore, if I could advise the Czar of Russia about his fleet, it would be to say as little about it, and to rely as little upon it, as possible; and the moment the French and English fleets arrive in his seas to keep it as snugly locked up as possible within the forts of Cronstadt, and the same of Sebastopol: for in that very battle of Navarino the French admiral's frigate, the *Sirene*, only a sixty-gun double-banked frigate, put itself alongside one of the Turkish flagships, a seventy-four; and my old captain, with his eyes upon that ship, and his watch in his hand, saw that seventy-four's mast shot down by that frigate in the course of ten minutes. Now, you have a contrast of what the French navy was like in 1827, and what the Russian navy was like in 1827."

"Well, but since then no expense has been spared to render the Russian navy perfect."

"Well, granted that that be so, and do not you suppose that the French navy has progressed just in proportion, and the English, too? and where, I should like to know, are all the screw steamships that the French and English fleets have got, and which can be taken in or out of action just as they please, or in the teeth of a head wind just as they like? I tell you, the Russian fleet won't have the ghost of a chance if it dare to show its nose outside of its harbours, and so the Emperor will find out if he lets his little bears but put to sea."

During the time that this colloquy was going on, the old Scotchman had been getting gradually more behind the chair of the Russian; and as the latter was too intently engaged in the conversation to see what McAllister was about, the Scotchman kept making the most horrible grimaces, shaking his finger, grinding his teeth, shaking his fist by his nose, and frowning until he brought his shaggy eyebrows into violent contact; but Eustatius, although he saw all this dumb show, appeared either not to understand it or quite resolved to take no notice of it; at any rate, there he sat quite at his ease, saying anything that the truth of the case appeared to require, quite determined that his nationality as an Englishman should never for a moment be doubted by his Russian interrogator, whoever he might be.

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"Suppose, young man," said the Russian, "instead of all this calamity happening to the Russian fleet, a different state of affairs should arise—supposing, in the anxiety of the French and the English to obtain possession of Cronstadt, they get their ships into action with these heavy batteries, and, after they are well crippled, the Russian fleet are then let out—how then?"

"Well, I suppose that if old Charley Napier, or whatever English admiral may be appointed, can only put a little salt on the Russian eagle's tail, he will prevent him from flying for many a long day. You may suppose anything you like, but I know my countrymen too well, to suppose they will commit the blunder of crippling their fleet by fighting stone walls."

"What else can they do to injure the power of Russia?"

"Do?—everything! In all probability what they will do will be this: they will blockade the Russian fleet, until it dare not show its nose out of Cronstadt. If it does come out of Cronstadt, they will annihilate it. In either case, the Russian fleet, to all intents and purposes, is useless. The same argument applies to Sebastopol. Let us suppose, therefore, as the most favourable position for Russia, that it never ventures into action; it is blockaded, neutralised for all purposes of war, all the other commerce and ports of Russia and the Baltic will then be in the hands of the enemy. If the Czar still holds out, the course of the Allies is then clearly to leave Cronstadt alone, to make an alliance with Sweden, invade Finland with a combined army of 100,000 strong, and shell St. Petersburgh; land an equal number of men of the combined forces in the Crimea, and shell Sebastopol; while this is going on, bring up an engine which Russia dreads more than all the armies or great fleets in the world."

"What is that?" said the Russian officer, looking up with some surprise.

"THE PRINTING-PRESS; inundate Russia with proclamations in the Russian language, setting forth the real causes of this quarrel, dethroning the Czar, proclaiming the emancipation of the serf, and offering peace and constitutional institutions to the Russian people; then, whatever number of men are requisite to take St. Petersburgh or Sebastopol, have them

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at any price, and lay them in ruins or hold them until Russia has paid the cost of the war."

"And what is Russia, young man, to be doing all this time?"

"Well, I suppose she may be doing what she can. Let her be doing all she did when Napoleon invaded her, and what did that amount to?—being beaten and defeated in every quarter, until the elements came to her assistance, and the French were driven out of Russia, not by the valour of Russians, but absolutely because the French had no possibility of furnishing their army with a supply. Do you suppose that Russia would not have been the prey, and spoil, and conquest of France, if Napoleon had been backed by an English fleet in the Baltic? Yes, that you may rely she would, though she had burnt St. Petersburgh as well as Moscow. Russia at the best can do no more than she did then. I have observed a great deal of Russia since I have traded in the Baltic, and I believe there is no country in the world whose resources, or whose real effective strength, are more exaggerated, as opposed to civilised nations, than Russia; for, like all barbarous countries, she is utterly without the strength of public opinion, and she is rotten to the core with all the cupidity of contractors, and that internal disorganisation which perpetually goes on, where one man undertakes to superintend or work an empire about fifty times too large for any human being's supervision. It will be very unfortunate for Russia if she get into such a quarrel."

"Why?"

"Because, in our days, war resolves itself more than ever into a question of money. Great Britain, who has so immeasurably the command of capital, has only to raise her finger, to call into her armies any amount of troops she may require from the mercenaries of other nations; and I believe that, reluctant as England is to go to war with Russia, still, if Russia put her to it, England will act as a commercial nation."

"How is that?"

"Why, of course, under a perfect knowledge that the first and heaviest cost is the best, and that it would be wiser for her to set in motion half a million of men under arms, and termi-

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nate the war in one campaign, in such a manner as it would be impossible for Russia to resist, rather than protract the war for ten years, and only employ 50,000 men; and, in any case, Russia may be sure that the war never will be ended, without her being made to pay the penalty of it to the last farthing."

"And pray may I ask, young man, how is it that you, who seem to have mused these very warlike musings, came to be only mate of a merchant-ship, instead of a captain of a frigate?"

"Well, perhaps you have asked me questions enough, and before I answer that I may ask you why you wish to know?"

The Russian officer, who looked extremely grave and savage during the previous part of the conversation, here threw himself back and smiled slightly, as he looked up to the scowling old Scotchman, McAllister.

The moment, however, the Russian looked into the engineer's face, away went the scowl, and all sorts of smiles appeared.

"Well, it is only fair he should put a question, is it not?"

"I wonder you have had the patience to bear with him so long, sir; but that is the case with all our countrymen; they are all such spoilt boys of fortune, like ginger-beer bottles full of pepper and pop."

"Well, we have asked him these questions, you know; we must not complain of his answering them truthfully. At his time of life, Mr. McAllister, we speak first and think afterwards; at our time of life, Mr. McAllister, you know we think first and speak afterwards." Then turning to Eustatius, the Russian said, "You will find, my young friend, some day, these two modes of speaking make a very great difference in a man's future life. Now for your question to me. You asked me why I wished to know how it is you are not captain of a man-of-war. Mr. McAllister tells me that you are a very active, enterprising young man, and that you have carried out the works under his orders with great fidelity. I wish to report to the Czar whether you are content to take a permanent employment under his Imperial Majesty, and be naturalised as a Russian?"

"I have already spoken on that subject," said Eustatius, with some little warmth, "to Mr. McAllister."

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"Am I to understand, then, that you will not follow his example?"

"What!" said Eustatius, "has he become naturalised, and given up his country?"

"Precisely," said the Russian; "and won't you follow his example?"

"Not while I have hands to work for my bread, or lips to beg for it," said Eustatius.

"Then, you do not like Russia?"

"It is not a question of my liking Russia; but it is the question of my loving England, and doing that which I think to be the duty of every man, to stand by the land where he was born, and where his fathers lived and died."

"Very well," said the Russian; "you may retire."

"Before I go, sir," said Eustatius, "you seem to be an officer in authority, you would do me a very great favour if you would help me to get into an English ship going home. I have mentioned my wishes to Mr. McAllister, and perhaps you will be kind enough to forward them?"

"You shall be attended to," said the Russian.

At this instant a knock was heard at the door.

"Come in," said the Russian officer.

The Polish aide-de-camp appeared, and, with a very deferential manner, whispered something in the ear of the Russian, who immediately arose, placed his hat on his head, and stalked out of the apartment.

The moment the door was closed behind, McAllister came up shaking both his fists, and dashing one hand into the hollow of the other, and stamping his foot upon the ground. "Odds, mon alive! where have your eyes been all this time? Haven't you seen the motions I was making to you? Who do you suppose you have been speaking to?"

"How the deuce can I tell?"

"Why, mon alive, that's the Emperor of Russia—that is the Czar."

"Hang me if I did not think so!" said Eustatius.

"Then, what did you mean by going on in that extraordinary way?"

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"Mean! I meant to let him know a little of the truth, and, as I thought it would be a long time before I could get another opportunity, I was determined to pitch it into him now."

"Well, you have done for yourself; it is a toss up of a bawbee if the rest of your life is not passed in Siberia, or the salt mines of Cracow."

"If I could only be sure of that, I would have let that fellow feel the weight of my fist over his teeth, when he talked of boasting."

"Pooh! in the next moment you would have been run through the body, and you richly deserved it."

At this moment in came the aide-de-camp once more, and put a slip of paper into the hands of McAllister.

"I thought so," said the latter, as he read it, and then handed it over to Eustatius, who read in Russian the following words in the writing of the Czar :—

"The young Englishman will remain in your charge till he is taken into custody."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A FEW moments after Eustatius had read the slip of paper, an officer and two Russian soldiers entered the room, and, telling Eustatius he was their prisoner, desired him to follow them.

Eustatius looked round on McAllister.

"You must go," said McAllister; then speaking in English, "After the imprudence you have been guilty of, I can do or say nothing to help you."

Poor Eustatius put his hand to his side, but in an instant he remembered he was wholly unarmed, and at the mercy of the despot whom he had bearded; so that there was nothing for it but obedience, and, following his guides to another part of the same fortress, there, to his surprise, he found his books and clothes had already been removed.

This prison—for such it was to be—had one window, strongly barred, which overlooked the sea: this was the only consolation which the poor prisoner was doomed to receive.

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From this little loophole he could make out all that was going on before him. A truckle-bed of very humble description was in the corner; his meals were brought to him by a sentry; and with no other resources except his books, and an occasional walk on the roof of an adjoining magazine, where a Russian officer generally received him, and exchanged a few commonplaces of courtesy, poor Eustatius was confined until the breaking up of the ice set free the navigation.

Soon after this occurrence, the sentry appeared one night about eleven o'clock, and, bidding him follow, his traps and himself were speedily embarked in the road of the harbour, when it was so dark that he could scarcely see his hand before him: they put him on board a Prussian barque bound for Copenhagen, and left him to make his way, as best he might, to the shores of old England.

As to McAllister, never from the hour that Eustatius was taken from the room where the singular conference was held with the Czar and the wary and caustic Scotchman, did Eustatius see or hear from him. At this he was not surprised, for it was only natural to suppose that a man who had sacrificed every national feeling for his own preferment could hardly trouble himself to visit a prisoner under the displeasure of that autocrat for whose service he resigned every feeling that is usually supposed to animate the breast of every honourable man. When Eustatius came to feel his clothes, and examine his chest, every farthing of his money was gone, but not one of his sketches had been discovered. Caring little for the loss of coin, which youth and industry would soon allow him to replace, he could scarcely retain his joy at thinking he had got clear of the clutches of that solitary tyrant whose single wish might have confined him for ever within the frozen wilds of Siberia, or imprisoned him in the perpetual darkness of a Polish salt-mine; in either case, a doom which has befallen thousands before himself for one-tenth of what he had dared to utter.

On arriving at Copenhagen, Eustatius learnt that war had just been proclaimed by England against Russia, and that the English fleet, under the command of Sir Charles Napier, had arrived in full force in the Baltic some time previously; and, finding several English merchant-ships about to sail for English ports,

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he took an appointment of second mate in a vessel bound to Hull, and, with no further incident than that of sighting in the distance Sir Charles Napier's squadron under all sail, he arrived, with a prosperous voyage, at the port of Hull; and, having received the small amount of wages due to him, he hastened to London, to make his respects to his old friend Malcolm Monteith, as having escaped in safety from the Russian gaol.

On his way up to London, in the comparative inaction of the railway-carriage, Eustatius turned over in his mind what he had better do with regard to his sketches of Cronstadt. If he had found an opportunity, when in the Baltic, it was his wish to have put these drawings in the hands of Sir Charles Napier; but that opportunity not having occurred, he debated whether it would be presumptuous, or an act of duty, to communicate them to the higher authorities at home. At one moment, he was fearful of over-rating any communication he might have to make; at another time it appeared to him it would be a dereliction of duty not to place them in the hands of those most interested in reaping every information; then he considered whether he should communicate them to Monteith, and leave him to forward them; then it occurred to him that, if they existed for any public purpose, they doubtless ought to be kept as secret, for the eyes of those high in office, who would best determine whether they might be made public or not; finally, he resolved to present himself at Monteith's office, merely notify his return, and write a note to one of the Government officials, stating of what he was possessed, leaving to them to see them or not, as they pleased.

Having taken the latter course, he received an invitation to dine with Monteith that evening; and dinner was scarcely concluded before a messenger from Downing-street arrived, to request his attendance at the lobby of the House of Commons, to wait upon one of the Ministers.

"Ha! ha! they have smelt you out already," said Monteith. "I suppose they think they can pump you of something. Well, get away down to the House; I suppose you would like to hear a debate there among those young gentlemen who make a rule of never talking more than fifty at once."

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In a short time Eustatius found himself with his back to the tall, carved, brass gas-burner in the lobby of the House of Commons; and, within a quarter of an hour, a man of fine stature and commanding features, somewhat stately withal, under whose white vest was seen just the edge of a dark crimson under-waistcoat, came out of the House of Commons, and said, "Mr. Smith, from Copenhagen?"

"Here!" said Eustatius.

The tall man immediately put his arm through that of Eustatius; and, leading him past the two wary janitors at the door of the House of Commons, took him through the division lobby on the ministerial side of the House, and then behind the chair of the Speaker, from that into the little room behind the chair of the Speaker to the left.

As he walked along, Eustatius cast his eye on the carved oak and green carpeting with which everything was fitted up. On each side of him extended large easy, permanent couches, covered with green morocco. On some were lying members of the House, fast asleep, with their hats drawn over their eyes, fatigued with their labours of the morning committee; on others, sat, in knots of two or three, a few quondam old codgers, discussing various questions connected with the Russian war; while others sauntered up and down the lobby, arranging papers for the evening, or awaiting an expected division.

On Eustatius' arrival in the little room, his eye fell on a large blue despatch-box, out of which stuck a small slip of paper, labelled "Lord John Russell."

"When did you arrive?" said the potential magnate, as soon as he had closed the door.

"This morning, sir."

"Good! Where are your drawings?"

"Here."

"What are the weakest parts of the fortress?"

Eustatius selected one out of the drawings he had made, and pointed out the spots. Other drawings contained soundings of the various channels, and remarks which, during the time that he had traded in those parts, he had been enabled to make.

"I will look these over, Mr. Smith, in the course of an hour,

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and should like to have a word with you again. Just drive up to my house and ask for me at twelve o'clock to-night; I will introduce you to one or two of my friends."

When twelve o'clock came, Eustatius, with all that excusable attention to personal appearance which possesses most of us at seventeen, drove up to the house of his new friend; he found it blazing with lights and resonant with music.

On giving his name, to his surprise no question was asked.

The name was called from landing to landing, and at last when he entered the withdrawing-room he found it crowded with guests, some of whom were sitting on the landing of the stairs; and there, amid the perfume of flowers, the blaze of wax-lights, and the intoxicating influence of beauty and of music, he stood for several moments entranced on his first entrance into London life, contrasting it in his own mind with the solitary dungeon in which he had been so long immured by the tyrannic Autocrat of all the Russias.

By this time the various incidents of toil and exposure through which Eustatius had passed had given to his cheek a dark healthy brown, lit up beneath by the warm glow of youthful blood, while his large expressive eyes were clear as crystal. His hair now grew in profusion, with a strong curl; while on his upper lip, young as he was, he had been successful in cultivating a most decided pair of black moustaches, that, with a long and silky wave, half shadowed and half enriched the fine lines of a delicately-formed mouth. The full and prominent chin bespoke the determination of his character; while the whiskers, scarcely grown, proclaimed him still in the first dawn of youth. Sea-air and the exercise of a ship had expanded his chest with unusual proportions. He already stood somewhat above the usual height, and the intellect which beamed from his face and the innate grace that adorned his movements bespoke him at once as a man out of the usual run of his fellows, and one who, to all appearance, had passed through a different career from that of the voluptuous and high-born Londoner. His coat, too, though it fitted him, was neither in the newest fashion nor of the Bond-street cut; and altogether he had scarcely entered the room when several eyes were fixed upon him.

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Presently his distinguished host espied him from the other end of the drawing-room, and, coming up to him, took him warmly by the hand. "Come this way," said he, and, drawing Eustatius towards the window, presented him to a little pale and intellectual-looking man, the delicacy of whose features proclaimed him suffering from the ill-health consequent on severe labour.

"Here, my lord, is one of the latest arrivals from Cronstadt and the Czar."

In a London party very little serves to rivet the attention of a host of idle people. "Cronstadt and the Czar" were soon whispered from one lip to another, and the interesting stranger in a few minutes became the lion of the evening.

One after another several friends of his host came up and put endless questions to Eustatius, but he had previously received a hint which sufficed to make him very wary; for, as his host turned from him to receive some other guest, he whispered in his ear as he passed, "Take care what you say."

All these inquiries, though put over and over again by each new-comer, Eustatius answered with endless patience and good humour.

"I must see him—I really must see him! You must introduce me to him—a real Russian lion! And has he indeed just come from Cronstadt? Oh, how charming! Where is he?"

These questions were put with great rapidity in a female voice by no means unfamiliar to the ear of Eustatius, who heard the reply made in the tones of his host—

"Yes, here he is. Oh, yes, I will introduce you with pleasure."

Poor Eustatius was already blushing deep with modesty when he found an introduction to himself thus earnestly desired in this assembly of grandees; but, after bearding an emperor, his presence of mind did not altogether forsake him, and turning round at the sound of his host's voice, in an instant out went both his hands, and before he could control himself he said—

"O Gwinnethlyn! O Lady Charlotte! this is a pleasure to meet you both!"

Gwinnethlyn—for it was indeed herself who leant on the arm of her lion-seeking mother—warmly returned the grasp of our

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hero with a pleasure that soon betrayed itself in her cheek and eyes; but alas, Lady Charlotte! instead of that charming Russian lion that you so eagerly sought a few seconds since one would imagine you had fallen into the arms of the Russian bear.

"Oh, indeed, Mr. Smith! Ah! I hope you are quite well, Mr. Smith," said Lady Charlotte, putting out her forefinger. "Have you just come from abroad?"

"Yes," said Eustatius; "I only arrived this morning from Hull on my way back from Cronstadt, where the Czar kept me a prisoner for some months."

"The Czar! Were you really a prisoner of that odious Czar?" said Gwinnethlyn.

"Yes, an actual living prisoner."

"For what offence?"

"Why, he came to cross-question me—as he thought, unknown—about the strength of the English fleet, and other matters, and I spoke out a little more boldly than he liked; but I will tell you more about it to-morrow. Where are you living?"

"Gwinnethlyn, I feel this room is insupportably hot. Where is my fan? Dear me, my unfortunate horses will catch their death of cold! The carriage has been waiting for us at least half-an-hour."

"Oh, the horses will come to no harm, Lady Charlotte," said Eustatius. "It is as mild a night as you could possibly desire; but if you are going to your carriage, do accept my arm."

This was a cruel blow, but Lady Charlotte could afford anything better than a scene; and as she was quite resolved not to take him home, and that he should not see Gwinnethlyn on the following day, she put her hand, not within his arm, but upon it, in the manner of royalty; and with this assumption of grandeur, and keeping poor Eustatius at as great a distance as possible, she moved to the door to her carriage.

"But, my dear mamma," said Gwinnethlyn, "you are making me guilty of a great many rudenesses. You forget my engagement in the next quadrille with Lord Dunderhead."

Never did Gwinnethlyn think she could mention the name

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of Lord Dunderhead with such exquisite delight. Viscount Dunderhead was one of the richest peers then unmarried in England. He had sighed, and bowed, and simpered, and said nothing to Gwinnethlyn for two seasons. Lady Charlotte had bored her to death with his virtues, and his pedigree, and his estates, and everything else that belonged to him (Lord Dunderhead), that could by any means be construed into a virtue of his lordship; and all to no purpose. After strict commands, many solicitations, and more excuses, Gwinnethlyn had promised to dance with him that evening; and here was Lady Charlotte placed in the cruel dilemma of either frustrating this very dance which she had taken so much pains about, or of giving to the lion of the evening the best of all possible opportunities of renewing his impressions in Gwinnethlyn's favour —he the observed of all observers.

Oh! it was a cruel position for Lady Charlotte, and she could have ground poor Eustatius into powder, and used him in the Russian cannon; but her will never equalled her wishes.

"It is very provoking, my dear child; but really the room is very oppressive. However, I think you had better fulfil your engagement with Lord Dunderhead; he is such a charming young man, so fascinating—all the girls are dying for him."

That was true enough, if she had only added the three words "and his acres," and had had the candour to make the little exception of Gwinnethlyn; but at that time Eustatius cared very little who was dying for Lord Dunderhead. If it had pleased Gwinnethlyn, Eustatius would have been the first to help in the accomplishment of her wishes, devotedly as he admired, and in his heart of hearts loved her; yet such was the abnegation of his idolatry, he had never dared in his own mind to think of the fair being to whom he owed everything otherwise than in the light of some superior angel, for whom it would have been a pleasure to have surrendered fifty lives had he possessed them.

"I think I will sit here, if Mr. Smith will be kind enough to take care of me; and you, Gwinnethlyn, go and see when this dance is likely to come off."

"I will, mamma," said that fair and able young diplomatist,

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but coolly putting her arm into that of Eustatius. "I must, however, deprive you of Harry—I cannot go alone, you know, through such a crowded room;" and in an instant, before Lady Charlotte could add another word, off flew her pair of doves before her very eyes, and, in the thick of that tremendous crowd of notables, it was in vain to attempt to follow them.

Before she could recover from this cruel blow, up waddled her dear old friend.

"Oh, I am so glad you have come, dear Lady Mumble," said Lady Charlotte, extending her hand. "I have received such a blow, I wonder I am able to support myself under it. Have you your salts with you? I have forgotten mine."

"Dear me, Lady Charlotte, what has happened? Has Gwinnethlyn rejected Lord Dunderhead?"

"Not quite; but I am afraid it is coming."

"Ah, how shocking! Who is that young man on whose arm I met her?—one of those horrid Guards? They are the ruin of the happiness of every family they enter, these horrid younger sons."

"Oh, worse than that—infinitely worse than the Guards. To use a vile pun, she has just gone off with her horrid old *protégé*, the black-guardsman."

"What, do you mean that that odious sweep-boy has returned?"

"Yes."

"Is it possible, Lady Charlotte?"

"Yes, Lady Mumble, I am convinced nothing will get rid of that creature. Will you believe it possible? He has positively escaped, first the fever, and then the Czar of Russia."

"Oh, dear me, how very shocking! and, what is still worse, Lady Charlotte, he is the handsomest man in the room to-night, I protest, by far. What has he been doing? Everybody is running after him—talking about him—all raving."

"Oh, dreadful! He has absolutely had the good fortune to be imprisoned by the Emperor of Russia, for telling the Czar that his fleet had no more chance against France or England, singly, than if they were cockboats of brown paper."

"What will you do, Lady Charlotte?"

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"What can I do, Lady Mumble? You know how all my life I have set myself against this extraordinary infatuation. How I wish that Lord Diamond had this boy in his throat!"

"Well, my dear Lady Charlotte, if he only stuck in his throat as he sticks in your 'gizzard,' as the poor dear admiral used to say, it would be diamond cut diamond indeed; but don't be disheartened, my dear Lady Charlotte—perhaps they will not meet again after to-night. I suppose you will not invite him to live with you any longer?"

"Oh, dear, no! Thanks to my prudence, he has a way of getting his own livelihood now. But how he could have got to this house, without my assistance, passes my comprehension to conceive. What's that I see? Goodness gracious! give me a smelling-bottle, Lady Mumble! The wretch is absolutely dancing a polka with Gwinnethlyn!"

Reader, have you ever been the lion of a London party? I do not mean a mere ordinary assemblage of bodies living in London, but a party at the house of some one who really is some one. Have you ever been the lion of an evening-party of a Cabinet Minister's wife? No? Then I will tell you what will happen whenever you find yourself in that position. In that single evening you will find your mane grow, and your claws expand, until you become a regular Leo for the rest of that season; and you will be licensed—nay, compelled—to shake your shaggy locks, and to roar if you will, at one house after another, of some of the best houses in London, night after night, and two or three houses in a night for several weeks to follow. This was the fate of Eustatius. Before he had quitted the drawing-room of his new friend, he received invitations for several distinguished parties. Lady Charlotte could not proclaim to any but her most intimate friends that the *distingué* young man who was so intimate with her daughter was anything but an eligible guest in her opinion, or else how came it to pass that he was so intimate with her child? While every person who looked at them, perceived at a glance such a striking family resemblance, that they went away with the most perfect impression that he was some near connexion. Night after night Gwinnethlyn continued to meet Eustatius, until all other swains, seeing the

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preference that was extended to the Russian lion, as he was called, gradually cried off, and left him the field very much to himself.

At last one morning Lady Mumble called upon Lady Charlotte, and disclosed the true state of affairs. Without giving Gwinnethlyn the slightest warning, the managing mother summoned Carne to her assistance, and ordered everything to be packed for Paris, and next day, by the express train for Folkestone, away went Lady Charlotte with the weeping Gwinnethlyn.

In vain Eustatius sought in every room that evening those eyes in which he had been accustomed to see himself with such delight. Everybody expected her! Nobody could find her! A hint from Gwinnethlyn had advised him not to make a visit to Berkeley-square to her mother's, unless by special invitation; but after missing her at every party where she had promised to be, and hearing nothing of her, in the depths of his despair he summoned courage to call and leave his card on Lady Charlotte, and inquire if the family were quite well.

"The family are out of town, sir," said the powder-headed butler, who, having entered the family since Eustatius went to sea, was ignorant who addressed him.

"Has Lady Charlotte gone down to Murmurbrook?"—the name of her country place.

"No, sir; they have gone to Paris this morning by railway."

"Very well, just give my name and say I called, will you?"

"Mr. Smith. Oh, yes, sir," said the butler, feeling a profound contempt for the name of Smith; and Eustatius turned away from the door, sick and more heavy at heart than even when he found himself in the casemated dungeon of the Czar of all the Russias.

From many of Gwinnethlyn's hints, our hero began to suspect the light in which Lady Charlotte was determined to view him; and thoroughly miserable at being thus suspected of standing in Gwinnethlyn's way, when he would have made any sacrifice for her advantage or happiness, he strode sorrowfully on towards Hyde Park, to gain a little solitude in a quiet walk on the green turf, and consider what he had better do.

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As he turned out of Berkeley-square into May Fair, he passed, on the opposite side, the door of his own lodgings, where he beheld standing, the servant of the house and some tall, intelligent-looking man of the lower order, wearing a light-blue cap, with a bright leather peak, bound round with green, and silver-edged.

"There he is," said the servant.

"Where?" said the stranger.

"Why, there, walking past on the opposite pavement, looking over at us."

As the street happened to be comparatively quiet at that moment, and no person passing, Eustatius heard these words, and stopped, wondering what they could mean.

The moment he paused, the stranger crossed, and, coming up to Eustatius, touched his cap, saying, "Please, sir, are you Mr. Henry Smith, lately a mate on board of one of Mr. Monteith's vessels?"

"Yes," said Eustatius.

"Could I have a little conversation with you in your own house?"

"Who are you, and what do you want with me?"

"My name is Peter Hall," said the man.

"Peter Hall," said Eustatius, "I never heard of you. Who, and what are you?"

"Well, sir, I hope I am a very great friend of yours, and wish to render you a very great service, if you will give me a few minutes' conversation in private."

"Well," said Eustatius, "you are an honest-looking fellow, and I am sure I want a friend to-day, if ever I wanted one; so come along."

Eustatius crossed the road with him, and, telling him to follow, mounted to his own apartment.

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CHAPTER XXXIX.

And what had become of the Marquis of Hardheart, that most amiable of men, that most upright of magistrates, since we last saw him dispensing justice on the judgment-seat, and spurning from his feet his own son?

What was it that, several times during that night, caused him to turn with sudden start from side to side, and cry, "What is the little wretch to me?" Is it true that in the silence of the night the thoughts of the peer wandered, as the thoughts of the peasant will, to that awful hour of futurity when the Judge of all mankind shall call each guilty occupant of the judgment-seat to the fearful account why he has denied justice, and passed by the greatest of all human opportunities—that of succouring the oppressed, and staying the progress of the wrong-doer? Why, again and again, did Hardheart's restless spirit strive to banish the pleadings of that little infant covered with the filth of the chimney, his weak hands and knees bleeding from innumerable scars, his clothes all ragged and exposed alike to the blasts of winter and the rains of summer? Why did this image haunt the mind of the marquis? Did it occur to him that he might yet have to give an account of that poor child to the all-seeing Maker and Searcher of human hearts? Well, it was so; and yet, when the morning dawned, the marquis dipped his polished razor into his golden shaving-pot, bathed his head in rose-water, arrayed himself in purple and fine linen, and thought no more of the abject suppliant of the day before.

If we want a proof of the truth of Scripture, and the history of man, can we not read it in the wickedness of our own hearts? Strange that it never occurred to the marquis, searching for his own son, that he might by possibility find him among the very dregs and offscourings of mankind. No! He wandered on from town to town; then he left England and travelled on the Continent; from the Continent he proceeded to Egypt, to India, to China, to Persia, to Russia—a perpetual demon seemed driving

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him forward, never leaving him any peace or happiness; still he was haunted by the loss of his own heir; still tormented with the idea of the detested part of his family succeeding him:—perpetually making inquiries in improbable quarters, paying agents to keep a look-out upon all kinds of shipping, at all sorts of ports, nursing up some vague idea that his son would be a runaway on board a ship. Always obstinately clinging to the belief that Eustatius would yet turn up, and keeping perpetually in his pay agents who supplied him from time to time with false information in order that they might still draw his largesses, he once more arrived at the mansion of Deer-Glen, in the year 1854, and there found a whole tray full of letters.

After breaking the seals of a number of these, his steward was announced to him on business; and once more, as in former days, he descended into the muniment-room, while the man of law had recourse to several documents to which he required to refer.

Once again, as before, the climbing-boy was in requisition; and while Lord Hardheart sat reading and tearing up the correspondence that had accumulated in his absence; still in resolute defiance of the law, he permitted a climbing-boy, in his own presence, to ascend and clean the chimney.

While he was thus engaged, the master sweep standing upon the hearth, and the attorney referring to the title-deeds of an estate, the marquis gave a sudden cry as if in pain. All eyes were fixed upon him, but the cause of his agony was not perceptible. He sat reading a letter with his mouth distended, as if so excited as to be scarcely able to draw breath. His colour had fled, his teeth chattered, his hands trembled violently, but still they held a document on which were fixed his distended eyes.

"Is it a spasm of the heart, my lord?" said his solicitor, jumping hastily to render him assistance, well knowing that a serious disease of this most vital organ had fixed upon the marquis, brought on in a great degree by the long years of mental torture through which he had passed.

Lord Hardheart replied not. The epistle which he perused was written in a handwriting never before familiar to him, and

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in the fingers of his left hand he held two letters in the same writing, one of which was closed with a large black seal.

The marquis seemed incapable of speaking.

Let us look over his shoulders, and read the lines which had agitated him so deeply.

"*The Three Mariners, Cherry Garden Stairs, Bermondsey.*

"My Lord,—I have this evening been summoned to the dying bed of a seafaring man named Mills, who has been taken ill at this tavern, and who, being of the Catholic persuasion, required absolution and the consolatory rights of our holy Mother Church in his last moments. In the confession which it was my duty to require from him, I found that he had committed a grievous wrong against your lordship, and, in the discharge of my sacred function, I withheld from him the desired absolution until he should make restitution.

"As, however, it is still probable that he may survive and recover, I have only obtained his permission to make these facts known to you, upon the condition that you would give him your solemn promise, as a peer, not to visit with punishment his offence, either upon himself, if he should recover, or upon any other person concerned in the outrage of which he has been guilty towards you. I need not to remind your lordship of the disappearance of your only child. Hasten, my lord, with all possible speed, to the bedside of this unfortunate man, lest the soul shall have flown to its account before you are able to give the required assurance, and I am enabled to reveal to you the particulars so essential to your peace of mind, and to this poor penitent's absolution.

"I have the honour to be, my lord,

"Your lordship's most obedient servant,

"Patrick O'Mahony."

After reading these few lines over and over again, and looking at their date, now two months old, the marquis wiped his forehead several times with his handkerchief, while the cold dew started out afresh every moment. At last, as if summoning up desperate courage, he broke open the other letters in the same caligraphy. One was dated four days later than the first

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letter, and repeating its substance. The third letter ran as follows :—

"*Three Mariners, Cherry Garden Stairs, Bermondsey.*

"My Lord,—Having been honoured with no answer to my two former letters, I conclude that your lordship is unfortunately from home; and having waited till the last moment, and seeing that death was inevitably about to seal the lips of the unfortunate penitent Mills, I have not felt myself authorised in withholding from him the last rites of the holy Catholic Church. On my earnest exhortation, I have, however, been enabled to obtain his leave to communicate to you the melancholy fact, that it was entirely through his instigation, and at his expense, and from feelings of revenge, that he procured the abduction of your son, who, after passing through one or two hands, was sold for some inconsiderable sum to some man at Manchester of the name of 'Bunning' or 'Burming'—that he was attacked by the small-pox, from which he recovered, and, as far as the deceased penitent knew, is still living; but, as the unfortunate man had been seized with partial paralysis before I was summoned to his bedside, there was considerable difficulty in ascertaining from him the exact pronunciation of this man's name, or the more minute particulars connected with the child's disappearance.

"I regret to tell you that the unfortunate man Mills expired this morning at two o'clock, and, concluding that your lordship was from home, I have taken the liberty, which I hope will not interfere with your lordship's views, of writing to one or two parish priests, friends of my own, now labouring in Manchester, and requesting them to use every endeavour to trace your lordship's son; and it is my intention, at an early day, to go down to that city, and apply the very imperfect description I could gather from the dying man's lips in this very interesting and most important service. I propose to have the honour of waiting personally on your lordship, should I be so fortunate as to be at all successful in discovering any trace of your stolen heir.

"I have the honour to be, my lord,

"Your lordship's most obedient servant,

"Patrick O'Mahony."

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On looking at the date of this last letter, the marquis perceived that it was written three weeks from the last missive—that is, nearly six weeks prior to its receipt. Ringing hastily for the house-steward, Lord Hardheart inquired if any person of the name of O'Mahony had ever been to the Hall during his absence, to call on him, or if he had heard anything of Mr. O'Mahony; but no person of that name, or at all answering the description of a Catholic priest, had been seen there.

It is very singular to remark the different ways in which different men will bear the same intelligence. Sometimes weak and nervous men receive the news of some exciting or overwhelming shock with wonderful tranquillity. At other times the strong and powerful, when suddenly called upon to undergo the same trial, seem beaten down by it, and crushed. This was the case with the Marquis of Hardheart. Whether from the ravages of that disease which grief had gradually wrought in his breast, or from some other nervous cause, it is idle now to inquire; but on reading these three letters, his whole frame trembled with the excessive agitation under which he laboured—the whole issue of his life seemed gathered into a focus of such irresistible strength as to overwhelm every thought, feeling, and energy.

He took the letters up—he laid them down—he strove to rise from his seat, fell back again, and absolutely gasped for breath; while the wild distraction of his manner, and the pallor of his face, brought out the ravages that time and grief had made in his once iron constitution, and, aided by the grey hairs, that his anguish yet tossed wildly about his forehead, gave him the appearance of premature decrepitude and extreme old age. As his friend and solicitor looked at him, a conviction passed over the attorney's mind that, if ever he saw the hand of death upon a countenance, he saw it there. He stood by the marquis, momentarily expecting to see him roll a corpse upon the ground.

"Bring some brandy immediately," whispered the solicitor to the steward.

"No, Robertson, no; I shall be better presently," said the marquis, who had overheard the order given. "Read those

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letters, Robertson, and advise me what to do—my mind is a perfect blank." Then calling upon his Maker in a wild and incoherent manner, the marquis's head fell back upon his chair, and Robertson hastily undid his neck-cloth, while the steward, who had rushed for the brandy, poured a little into a wine glass and moistened his lips.

While they were still attempting to revive the marquis, and momentarily expecting his last sigh—while yet the attorney was trying in the excitement of the moment to get a collected conception of what this appalling correspondence contained, suddenly the noise of feet was heard along the passage, and in rushed the groom of the chambers. "Mr. O'Mahony is here, and wishes to see his lordship without a minute's delay."

"O'Mahony, O'Mahony!" repeated the marquis, at the sound of that name opening his eyes and starting up for a moment; "show him in."

There was no occasion to add those words. Mr. O'Mahony had followed close upon the footsteps of the footman, and, by the time the words were off his lordship's lips, the spare and aged figure of the Catholic priest stood beside him, in his black surtout coat, with a stand-up collar, and skirts that reached nearly to his heels.

"My son! my son! have you found my son?"

O'Mahony hesitated.

"Quick, quick, I can bear no further suspense! Have you found my son?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Where?"

"He is here, my lord."

"Here! where?"

"My lord, bear with patience a little further delay, and I fear a sad trial."

"No, no," said the marquis, jumping to his feet. "I can bear no more. I can die; but more I cannot bear. Where is my son?"

"My lord—"

"No, not a word."

"No, my lord; I am sorry—"

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"No, not a word of sorrow—you said he was here. Do you mean in this room?—where is he?"

"My lord, we have traced him, sold from hand to hand through most unhappy occupations."

"Is he alive?—I care for nothing but that. Is he alive, and is he well?"

"I hope so, my lord, but—"

"What signifies his occupation, then? Is he not still my son What is his occupation?"

"This, my lord," said the Catholic priest, pointing to the master chimney-sweeper who stood upon the hearth, and another sweep who, unnoticed, had glided into the room along with O'Mahony.

"A sweep!" exclaimed the marquis, with a cry of horror and surprise.

"Yes, my lord, we have traced him from one master to another, until we find that he has come to work in this neighbourhood, and is at present absolutely engaged in this house."

"It must be a lie—my son can never be a sweep. How have you identified his person?"

"By the three red stars on the right shoulder."

"Oh!—oh!—oh!" groaned the marquis, passing his hand over his eyes, "it is too true!" then, after a few moments' pause, "But you said that he was here; neither of these can be my son—they are too old."

"True, my lord; but I am told he has come here this very morning to ascend this very chimney."

"Whatt! his man's apprentice?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Fellow, how old is he?" speaking to the master sweep.

"About seventeen, your honour."

"Down with him!—call him down this very instant!"

"Well, my lord, he ought to have been down a long time ago. I have been expecting him down this last half-hour."

"Half-hour, villain! Has the child been up the chimney half-an-hour?" said the marquis, growing every moment more excited; but Robertson, who remembered the aberration of his

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mind some years back, trembling lest he should fall once more into it, said—

"You have not been in this room half-an-hour, sweep.'

"Oh, yes, I have, and more, only my lord has been busy reading his letters."

"Surely nothing could have happened to the child? How long ought he to have been?"

"Well, my lord, he ought not to be more than twenty minutes; we never have taken more with this chimney, only this boy is rather bigger than I have usually sent up."

"Scoundrel!" said the marquis, shaking his fist in the man's face, "if anything happens to the boy, look to your life—I'll shake the very heart out of you! Call up the chimney instantly, and go up after him."

"I will, my lord—I will. I hope nothing has happened to the boy, I am sure;" and the sweep, putting his head inside the soot-cloth, began to holloa "Harry, Harry, Harry!" but no Harry, however, replied.

"Do you hear him answer?" said the marquis, dashing down the soot-cloth in the agony of his mind, and allowing the soot to fly into the room all over his papers.

"No, my lord; you see this always was a very awkward chimney. First it goes along in one angle, then it goes along in a dead flat, and then it goes up again."

"How and what is that to me? Up after him directly," kicking the unfortunate sweep with all his might.

"My lord," said the sweep, coming out of the chimney, "how can I help it? When boys goes up chimneys, they must take their chance of what happens. I cannot go up this chimney after him, I am too big a man at my time of life. We must send off for another boy. There is a small boy lives at Brierly Hill."

"Brierly Hill, you scoundrel! that is ten miles distant."

"No, my lord, I don't think it is more than nine and a half."

"Why, if anything happen to the child, he will be dead before you can get a boy from Brierly Hill;" and the marquis, tearing out a handful of his grey hairs, scattered them on the ground. "Oh, O Heaven! that it should come to this!

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Cannot you go along the course of the chimney from room to room, and see if he answers?"

"Yes, my lord, we can do that."

"O Robertson! Robertson!" exclaimed the marquis, in a tone of indescribable anguish, more like a man going to burst into tears. "Come away, my dear fellow, and see whether we can rescue my unhappy child."

"I will, my lord," said Robertson, throwing down the letters, and darting after the marquis, who, in the extremity of his agony, quite forgot all about his muniment-room, its boxes, and keys, and papers—that privileged precinct which no unhallowed eye was ever to behold unless his lordly guardianship presided.

Following upstairs into the dining-room the marquis, the latter, like a man distraught, pointed out to his steward the direction the flue took, where it wound in one place, then ran in a straight line in another, then finally ascended a long and perpendicular shaft at a right angle.

Then, for the first time, Lord Hardheart began to see the tremendous difficulty of that position for a poor and tender infant to climb in darkness and in soot! Then he began to see what he had so often declared "for his very life he could not perceive—the hardship of sending a child up a chimney!"

When his lordship had pointed out the tortuous and dangerous course the chimney took to Mr. Robertson, and had rapped and tapped all along it from library to drawing-room, from drawing-room to the garret-floor, and nothing like a sound was heard along the whole course, and had sent some of his servants out into the park to see if the brush was jutting out from the top of the chimney, and others upon the roof to call down to him, the imminence of the peril became perfectly visible to everyone around. And why? Because the chimney contained no longer a poor unfriended outcast, but a young and expectant earl, the son of a marquis, the heir to dignity, and wealth, and power.

Out upon you, sycophants, toadies, and grandee-hunters! Flesh and blood is nothing in your eyes, unless it is wrapped in ermine and set in gold!

"My lord," said Robertson, "your lordship had better not

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lose time. You had better send for a bricklayer, to cut a few holes in this flue, from room to room; and send for the surgeon, to be ready to attend the earl the moment we get him out."

"Send—send, my good fellow—send anywhere or anything, only give me back my son!"

Off went messengers, off went horses, off went carriages right and left; and while the marquis kept wandering about like a madman from room to room, calling on his child, adjuring him by the tenderest expressions to answer him if only with a word, time flew by, and in the course of half-an-hour there had arrived at the hall Mr. Doyley, the architect, Mr. Spurgin, the surgeon, and two of the bricklayers employed on the estate under the direction of the professional man. The marquis was too far upset to be of any practical use. Two holes were simultaneously cut—one at the lower angle through the billiard-room, another at the superior angle where the chimney entered the shaft in the best drawing-room.

Ah! that was the time to calculate a saving of expense, in employing a five-shilling child, instead of a two-guinea machine! Totally regardless of the exquisitely-figured paper, the enriched gilded mouldings, the satin couches, the velvet-piled carpets, the luxurious hearth-rugs, the carved furniture, and ormolu, the marquis passed from one room to another.

"Cut for your lives! Cut for your lives! Do not lose a moment. Ten guineas to the first man who finds the spot where he is confined!" The surgeon remained urging the workman in the billiard-room, but the architect and the elder sweep stood, spiriting on the man who worked at the breach in the drawing-room wall.

Here was the great danger, as Doyley had told the marquis years before, in that very house, and told him in vain; but the walls were thick: one layer of bricks after another was destroyed. At every pause in their toils the marquis was heard calling him, "Eustatius! dearest Eustatius!" But no sound was heard in reply.

"O Heaven, that ever it should come to this!" groaned the marquis, flying about from one spot to another, covered with lime, dust, ashes, and soot, the very picture of agony and despair, and, be it also added, of fearful remorse.

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At last a hollow sound was heard in the chimney, and a bricklayer cried, "Through the wall."

"Now then, my man" said the architect, "take care how you move those inner bricks; remember, a single brick falling on the child's head may settle him."

"Aye, I'll remember," said the man, and, putting his fingers in, he tore the bricks and mortar outwards, and in a few moments cried, "Here's his head! here he is!"

"He's found, marquis, he's found, thank God!" cried the architect, bursting into the billiard-room, and, in his joy, seizing both the marquis's hands.

"Come, come quickly, all of you, and get him out," cried Lord Hardheart, darting into the drawing-room, mounting the ladder, and thrusting his arm into the sooty chimney, as if anxious only to lay his hand upon his son's head.

"Yes, yes, he is found, he is found! Lift him out, lift him out!"

"Stay, my lord," said Doyley, "we must make a little larger opening first. Now, both of you bricklayers tear open that hole as wide as you can."

"Down with it to the ground!" said the marquis; "never mind the mantel-piece—down with it!"

"It is not so much in the way, my lord, as to require that; we will cut it by the side here."

"Oh, I am so thankful! Do you think, Spurgin, that he can be alive?"

"I hope so, my lord."

"What will you want to revive him?"

"Well, my lord, a little brandy-and-water, and perhaps we may want to bleed him. Order a room to be got ready."

"Oh, never mind rooms; bleed him here. Open the window. Bring water. Give your orders, Spurgin, and get everything ready."

"It is all ready, my lord," said Spurgin. "I gave my orders a few minutes ago to the butler. We had better have him taken up stairs; it may be necessary to put him to bed for a day or two."

"My own room," said the marquis, "my own room; there is the little bed he used to lie in."

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"Ah, Spurgin!" suddenly said the marquis, turning round upon the noble-hearted doctor, and clasping both his hands round that of his medical friend, "I have never suffered that little bed to be disturbed since the last time he used it;" and overcome at last by the supremacy of nature, the marquis sank into the nearest chair, and the tears trickled down both his cheeks, leaving, as they slowly moved along, a furrow, through which the clear skin appeared—the tears washing away the soot, and lime, and ashes, which had accumulated on his face.

"Calm yourself, my lord. Please God, this may yet end well."

"I have not deserved it, Spurgin," said the marquis and I dare not hope."

At this moment the two bricklayers, who had opened a tremendous breach in the drawing-room wall, called out, "Give us a candle here."

The butler drew a vesta-match from the gold inkstand-dish on the drawing-room table, and gave it to Doyley, who leaned over the bricklayers, and threw its light down into the flue.

There the unfortunate climbing-boy was seen entangled in an impacted mass of soot, his right arm stretched out, as many a poor climbing-boy has been before him, and as English people seem determined that many a poor climbing-boy shall again be, with the fatal brush half clasped in his hand, the soot-cap half disengaged from over his face by his dying struggles, and the swollen and flushed features resting where life had left them, on the right shoulder.

The bricklayers and the architect exchanged glances for a moment, and the latter, lifting up his hands in pity and distress, could scarcely command his voice to say, "Draw him gently out."

Doyley himself taking hold of the poor boy's right arm, one bricklayer with his fingers tore away the compressed soot from around him, and the other bricklayer placing his hands under the boy's shoulders, with some difficulty and as little violence as possible they drew him from his awful death-bed; and, regardless of the heap of soot that fell from his person, bore him to the couch beside the open window, in hopes that the reviving breath of summer would recall the vital spark.

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The marquis saw the child in their arms, and stared at the helpless form with a wild and haggard look; then dashing suddenly forward to the sofa, seized one of the passive hands, and, bending over the distorted countenance, exclaimed, in a voice of agony that went to every heart—

"O Eustatius, speak to me!—if but one word—Eustatius! darling Eustatius!" then, as those swollen lips made no reply, "O doctor! doctor! can you do nothing for him?"

"Yes, my lord; but he had better be removed out of this room; we must dash him all over with cold water."

"Hang the room, and all that it contains! Dash away!"

Taking a large sponge full of the liquid element, Spurgin dashed it full upon the outraged livid face and neck, where the swollen veins rose like whip-cord, and over his violet-coloured lips; while the marquis, seizing a wet towel, washed, as clean as he could, the right shoulder, and, as the three vermilion stars appeared in sight, uttered another cry of the deepest agony. Still not the slightest trace of life could be discerned.

"Now, my lord, we must inflate the lungs," said Spurgin. Taking from a box that he had brought with him a little apparatus of bellows and pipe, the surgeon put it together in a few seconds, poured into a reservoir beneath it some strong chloride of soda, and then said, "Doyley, here—you use this bellows gently, as I tell you, while I put this tube into the patient's mouth—so. Now, then, Doyley—now gently. Stop. Now, then, blow again—now, then, rest again." As Spurgin gave these directions, Doyley, by using the bellows, inflated the child's lungs. Spurgin then relinquished his hold upon the lips, which he had been fixing tightly round the pipe, applied his hands to the emaciated chest of the poor child, and, pressing it gradually to the backbone, expanded the chloridated atmosphere that Doyley had previously injected. In this way they continued pursuing artificial respiration for nearly half-an-hour; while the marquis applied mustard cataplasms to the feet, and one of the servants passing his hand under the child's body applied a gentle friction along the course of the spine.

"Does he revive?" said the marquis.

"Not yet, my lord," said Spurgin.

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A deep groan followed this intimation.

"Keep your heart up, my lord. Bring me a little brandy, butler," said Spurgin; and, drawing from his case of instruments a sponge, with a slip of whalebone attached to it, he dipped it into the spirit, and slightly pressed it. After it had been actually passed into the child's stomach for some moments, he applied his ear to the region of the heart, and held the pulse with his hand; still no life was apparent.

The marquis held the other wrist, and, sitting down upon the same sofa, gazed upon the dead body with an intense agony and remorse, that none who did not see that frightful picture could realise.

"Keep your courage up, my lord," said the kind and able surgeon; "we will now try electricity."

With the quickness of experienced science the doctor opened another apparatus which he had hastily brought with him in his carriage, and, pressing into his service two of the servants, applied the electric fluid to the region of the origin of the phrenic nerve, and thence transmitted it along the course of the nerve to the seat of the diaphragm, alternating this with the application of the fluid to the par vagum and great sympathetic nerve, just under the sterno mastoid muscle.

Still Lord Hardheart gazed and gazed, and still the tears coursed one another, large and brightly, down his cheeks. The mouth remained open—his gaze seemed to fix in vacancy upon the pitiable object before him. As the medical man raised the shoulders of the boy, there was the back of the neck covered with large wide-spread ulcers and half-healed sores, all impregnated with soot, contracted in his painful and murderous calling. How bitterly then, again and again, must Lord Hardheart have recalled his speech, "For the life of me I cannot see the hardship of a boy climbing a chimney!" Alas! he saw it now in its most appalling form, and then it struck him to the heart with the irresistible power and deadly effect of lightning.

"Do take a little brandy, my lord," said Spurgin, who watched the countenance of the marquis, and, knowing the cardiac disease under which he laboured, expected every moment to see him make a second corpse in the room.

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The marquis said nothing—he was past speaking, but mutely shook his head; while Spurgin, gathering hopes from the amount of tears he continued to shed, went on with unremitting courage and perseverance in that humane course of science, the boast and delight of which is to feel and know that it subserves the very noblest purposes of succouring suffering humanity.

At this awful moment, when all hope had quite expired in the breast of the horrified group in that splendid room, a noise was heard along the passage which led to the grand hall.

"I must come in, and I will see the marquis, I don't care who is with him, or what he is engaged about," was heard in a voice that the marquis recognised, though he could not name the speaker.

A slight scuffle followed, and in a few moments in dashed Peter Hall, leading in his hand our hero.

"My lord, I have found your son, and here he is!" cried Peter Hall.

The marquis started up like one shot. The moment he gazed upon Eustatius, the speaking likeness that tall and handsome form bore to the celebrated earl, the boast and honour of his line, struck not only the marquis, but everyone in the room; for there, right opposite to him, hung the portrait painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller, a copy of which, in the house of Lady Charlotte D'Auberville, had so struck Gwinnethlyn with the same truth.

There was the same exquisite and speaking eye, the same beautifully chiselled nose, with his high arched nostril, the light streaming through with a delicate rosy hue—there was the same short lip—there was the same full, prominent chin; even the dark silk moustache was repeated, and the long flowing curls: the likeness was wonderful.

"What is this? what is this? Which is the impostor?" cried Lord Hardheart, his whole form shaking with emotion, and endeavouring to point to the three vermilion stars on the shoulder of the dead boy.

"Show your shoulder, my lord," cried Peter Hall, not allowing Eustatius time, but tearing off his coat, and turning up his sleeves, and there on the white skin became instantly apparent

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three small stars which the marquis had made with his own hands.

"What is the meaning of this strange resurrection?" cried the marquis.

Eustatius was himself puzzled—some faint remembrance of his youth flitted before him; but so many years had elapsed that he strove in vain to recall some act that he knew was all important to bring to his recollection, but which the severely tried recollection of childhood would ill supply.

"Stop," said Doyley, darting forward, "we can soon test who is the true son. Do you remember, Spurgin, when the young earl made that deep wound upon his thigh in opening his box of toys, when you and I were here?"

"To be sure, Doyley; the true earl, whoever he may be, must bear that mark upon him to his death-bed." Seizing a sponge of cold water, Spurgin immediately rubbed clean the thigh of the poor dead sweep; but no scar was there.

"Turn up your trowsers," said Doyley. "This was the leg;" and, cutting the strap of Eustatius from his boot, he hastily rolled up the cloth from the right leg, and there, just above the knee, was seen the very scar made on the day when, in anger and disdain, Lord Hardheart rejected the too faithful advice of Doyley, and rejected the services of a honourable friend. The marquis's eye viewed with painful intensity the two operations. He stooped down to examine the leg; and the moment he saw the scar on the one boy, and the absence of it on the other, conviction in his heart and soul became complete.

"Thank God! thank God! this *is* my son! This *is*—" cried the marquis, throwing his arms around the neck of Eustatius; but, alas! that sentence was doomed never to be completed.

The second shock of joy had proved more terrific than the first of anguish and despair.

Eustatius felt the weight of his father pressing on his chest more and more. At first he deemed it was affection, and returned it; but in another moment he found the wasted figure of his parent dragging him to the ground.

"Help, help, he faints!"

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The arms of Doyley and Spurgin were thrown instantly under the marquis' shoulder.

"Lay him on the ground, lay him on the ground," cried Spurgin; "bring the brandy to his lips quickly."

Ah, no! it was of no effect. The fiat had gone forth from Him in whose dispensation alone are the decrees of life and death. Science, use all your knowledge, all your power; art, exhaust all your resources!—never more shall life be restored to that once proud and imperious heart—never more shall those lips pronounce another word of welcome to the son so long and so mysteriously lost, so painfully and so vainly sought, and all too lately found!

All, for him, was over beneath the sun. The Marquis of Hardheart lay a corpse upon the floor of his gorgeously decorated and disfigured drawing-room. Ah, presumptuous and deluding rank! Where now is the difference in the clay of the heart-broken marquis and the smothered climbing-boy?

One difference alone was visible in that gorgeous apartment—the dead climbing-boy, now that he was no longer suspected of being an earl, had not a relative there to mourn for him; and though there were some noble hearts in that room, true sons of nature and ornaments of their species, yet still their sorrow could not be expected to amount to anything more than the mere pity which every man feels for human suffering, however unalloyed; but, for the marquis, when he sunk upon the ground, and death had planted upon his features the unmistakeable impress of mortality, there arose a cry and a wail which found an echo in every bosom.

Poor Eustatius! in that moment of anticipated joy, who can paint the apparent desolation that overwhelmed his warm spirit after long years of isolation, and that intense yearning for returning affection which is the characteristic of youth?

"Willie! Willie! my dearest Willie!" cried he, throwing himself on the dead body of his father, clasping with vain and frantic tenderness his hands, his forehead, his lips; while every object around—the distant hills. the woods, the dark cedar-trees, the lake, the bridge, the house, the pictures—all brought back to his young memory the happy, happy hours of infancy he had

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passed on that spot, blest with the untiring devotion and tenderness of that parent so lately restored to him, only to expire in his youthful arms!

When the spectators around beheld this touching picture, they did indeed feel for the bereaved and sorrow-stricken earl!

"Save him! save him! Is there no doctor?" cried Eustatius.

"My dear young friend," said Spurgin, "we will do everything we can for him."

And everything was done for the marquis that could be done; but, after everything had been done that surgical or medical skill could suggest, Eustatius found, in the depth of his affliction, that he had only discovered, to lose, that Willie —the object of his ceaseless hopes—the father so often called, so long remembered, and so vainly loved!

CHAPTER XL.

THE proverb tells us, "ill-news flies apace;" but it has forgotten to explain to us the cause—perhaps Rochefoucauld has given us the explanation, but without intending it to apply to the proverb. "There is something in the misfortunes of our best friends which is not wholly displeasing to us," says the French cynic; and thus it is that both friends and foes seem to take a pleasure in transmitting to our ears everything which has a tendency to annoy us, and, on the wings of this unamiable quality of the human mind, it is that ill news travels fast.

Lady Charlotte D'Auberville congratulated herself when she reached Paris, that she had at last got rid of that odious sweep-boy, even though, at the same time, she hadl eft behind her that pet of her anticipations, the widely-acred Viscount Dunderhead.

Strangely it seemed to poor Lady Charlotte, but scarcely were her secret felicitations uttered to herself, when, on the following morning, arrived a letter by post from her dear friend Lady Mumble, telling her, among other things, that she

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would be sorry to hear that her kinsman, the long lost Earl of Hopemore, was at last discovered; "and you may imagine," added her ladyship, "what rejoicings the Marquis of Hardheart will make of it."

On hearing this intelligence, Lady Charlotte for once made no sham of it, but really did go into six hysteric fainting-fits, one after another. At last she began to come a little to herself, and Gwinnethlyn attempted to comfort her, by assuring her she never had thought anything of the title, and cared nothing for the loss of the property. Lady Charlotte replied to these endearing truths by telling her she was a "little fool," and unable to estimate the value of what she had lost. "But," added Lady Charlotte, "one of the most provoking things is to think that I should actually have incurred that heavy attorney's bill to Mr. Cleanmeout for extra costs, as between client and solicitor, in getting an injunction to restrain the marquis from cutting down timber, which now, of course, goes to his detestable son. I wonder, after all, where he has been all this while, or whether he is the true son. Well, I do declare, Gwinnethlyn, this is the most provoking world to live in. There never was such a scandalously used creature as myself, I do believe."

"Oh, my dear mamma, how can you say so? Just think of the innumerable blessings you possess, and think of all the horrors that boy Harry went through on the trial before Lord Diamond."

"Lord Diamond, child, that is the very source of all my sorrow. If it had not have been for that little ungrateful wretch, the sweep-boy, you would have married Lord Dunderhead, or the Earl of Widedirt, long ago; either of them matches that would have given you one of the first establishments in Europe."

"My dear mother, why are you so deluded by all these ideas of great establishments? Look at the poor Marchioness of Hardheart; she married for a great position, and what wretchedness she has had through life, separated from her husband, and living in a moral desert. You, I suppose, thought you were going to marry a great position, and yet you are exclaiming you are the most ill-treated person in the world."

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"Pray, Miss Prate Wisdom, what do you call a good position?"

"To thank God for His blessings, and be only too thankful for anything He gives us."

"Well, I must say you seem to have picked up some most extraordinary notions. I suppose your young sweep from the Baltic taught you that. Did he bring the lesson straight from the Czar?"

"No, my dear Bu'," said Gwinnethlyn, winding her arms around her mother's neck; "but I bring you this kiss straight from my heart."

Ah, Lady Charlotte! were you answered there? Was it possible even for you to say that you would not love that angelic and forgiving disposition, that, with all your taunts and all your annoyances, answered only with affection, and repaid you only with endearments? Did it never occur to you that love like hers was worthy of a holier return than seeking to make her the envied summit of a heartless grandeur, the unblessed possessor of vulgar gawd and ostentatious trappings—the mistress of endless lackeys, delusive glitter, and unavailing wealth? Did it never occur to you that you might make her a better return, by seeking to gratify that harmless and natural affection, which you knew her young heart to entertain for one whom her pity had saved from destruction and degradation, and raised to well-deserved honour, and fairly gained independence? But on this point, however much we might talk of your failings and your sensibility, you are obstinately mute.

Mute, alas! on this point was Gwinnethlyn, for she was too wise to broach to her mamma the topic too dear to her own lips for discussion, and which she would rather have died in nursing than have exposed to the unkind remarks of a parent whose nature was not sufficiently elevated to know the paradise of true affection.

In vain Lady Charlotte pressed Gwinnethlyn to accept a host of invitations that flowed in upon her, for, whenever she was seen in her rides and drives in Paris, she was the attraction of every glass. At the opera, at the ball, the dance, and at

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the Court drawing-room, many an eye looked in vain to find out those dove-like glances, and that sylph-like form.

"I do declare, Gwinnethlyn, you grow paler and paler every day. What is the matter with you, child?"

"Nothing, my dear mother," said Gwinnethlyn, and, as if to give a flat contradiction to the assertion, one little drop filled Gwinnethlyn's eye, and fell upon her arm.

In an instant Gwinnethlyn started from her chair, and darted to her own room.

"I do believe she is actually thinking of that horrid sweep-boy," said Lady Charlotte; and Lady Charlotte, for once in her life, was quite correct. She was thinking of that horrid sweep-boy, and, what is more, that horrid sweep-boy was thinking of her, though Lady Charlotte little imagined in what a position he stood.

And where was Eustatius?

At the moment of his father's death, fortunately for him, he was surrounded by the stanchest friends and the very best advice.

The traditions of the virtue and the beauty of the lost heir had haunted Deer-Glen Hall like some good spirit, and were treasured in the hearts of all the retainers of the family, who, but for the remembrance of that bright and beautiful vision, must have fled the place, thinking that nothing good had ever belonged or could belong thereto. Through all the long, dark night of the deceased marquis's tyranny, his madness, his gloom, his ferocity, his despair, his fickleness, his endless tempers and humours, the hope that the young earl would once more come to hand sustained their spirits on many an occasion.

Now, when he was actually found—now, when in personal beauty he surpassed all their expectations—now, when his kindness, and gentleness, and affection were seen to keep pace with his appearance, it may be imagined what a revulsion of feeling and thankfulness filled every heart whose destinies were connected with the fate of Deer-Glen.

Foremost among the admirers of the child, and the mourners for his loss, were Spurgin and Doyley; even Robertson, hard-headed lawyer as he was, pondered with many a regret over the

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disappearance of the only heir, and the subtlety with which the efforts for his recovery had been foiled.

Leading him at last, reluctant and all but heart-broken as he was, from the room where his dead parent had been placed upon a sofa, Robertson took charge of all those necessary duties that devolve upon the relatives of the dead.

Every step which was requisite to be taken for proving his identity and succession to his honours and estates was forthwith set in train. All the evidence that was in the possession of the Catholic priest was substantiated and put on permanent record with the communication made to him by Mills, his journey to Manchester, the names of the other Catholic clergymen who had assisted him, and recommended him to Peter Hall as a man who, by his constant scrutiny of the climbing system, and his detestation of its horrors, was sure to track out the history of the lost child if human being could do it. The moment the matter was mentioned to Peter, and the marks described of the young earl, he remembered having seen those very marks on the shoulder of the boy whom he had seen come out of a boiler-flue when he had the boards turned over, and the case heard before Lord Hardheart at Scarborough.

Having sent the Catholic clergyman instantly down to Scarborough to trace the child from hand to hand, he remained behind in Manchester to try and trace him in that direction; but when he came to reflect on the description of the boy's age at which he had been stolen, he remembered that the same master had a younger child who was too young to climb, and respecting whom he had always remarked a singular shyness in Burman's conversation. This awakened the natural acuteness of Peter, and he thought it would be no unwise plan, while he left the Catholic clergyman to trace out the one boy in one direction, it he endeavoured to trace out Burman and the younger child in another. Knowing well what were the chief haunts of that miserable ruffian, he set off on one of his usual tours of investigation, and, by dint of endless perseverance, tracked Burman to Leeds, and from Leeds to Dearsley House; and then at once he remembered the tremendous outrage that had been there perpetrated, Burman's trial and transportation,

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and the taking from him the young child to bring up by Lady Charlotte D'Auberville. Having once got this clue, Peter never left it until he succeeded in tracing the second Harry into the service of Malcolm Monteith, and finally wormed his way until he stood at the door of the lodgings of Eustatius, where our hero encountered him.

As soon as they were alone in our hero's apartment, he at once explained the object of his visit, and asked Eustatius to show him his right shoulder. A single glance sufficed to Peter; and though he still was puzzled as to having seen the same mark on the other boy, he did not like to broach the existence of any other person with a similar mark, but told him at once who he believed his father to be, and both set off without the loss of a minute's time to Deer-Glen Hall.

The result the reader knows.

CHAPTER XLI.

A FEW days after the funeral of the marquis had taken place in the family-vault, which, as the reader will remember, was in the church in the park, Eustatius, now the Marquis of Hard-heart, desired Robertson to ring for Peter Hall, who had, of course, remained in the house that he had so essentially served; and when Peter made his appearance, "Peter," said the young marquis, "I wish to serve you in the most essential manner you can dictate. Tell me how to do it."

"Well, my lord," said Peter, "I should like to live and die in your lordship's service; but, my lord, I am a married man, and have several grown-up daughters, some of whom have gone out into service. If your lordship was married, now, and had a little child or two, and wanted a young nurse, I could recommend one of my daughters to you. I know she would be the making of your lordship's family."

Grave and melancholy as Eustatius' position was, he could not help smiling at this burst of nature on the part of Peter, who, when he had been told to provide for himself, thought first of providing for his children.

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"Well, Peter, my friend, I am afraid you are going too fast," said the marquis. "All that sort of thing may arrive in due time; but you are fond of travelling. Send for your family, and let them come into the house, and I will see by and by if I can give you a lodge in the Park; and while they are here, would you like to come over to France with my valet? I am going to travel a little."

"My lord, I should like to go all over the world in your service, and to live and to die in it," said Peter.

"Agreed!" said the marquis. "Mr. Robertson, there, will find you what money you want. You fix your own wages, and whenever you have settled the amount let me know."

"My lord," said Peter, pulling his hair, "you have made me the proudest and happiest man in this kingdom, and I hope there is no blood of mine that will not be ready to die for you at any time."

"I can never thank you sufficiently, Peter," said the marquis, holding out his hand to Peter to shake, "but thanks alone are very idle; and when you have sailed under my orders till you are tired of it, only speak the word; and remember, Mr. Robertson has instructions, if anything happens to me in your life, to pay you your wages as long as you live."

The following week saw the young marquis, with three servants, on board the packet sailing from Folkestone to Boulogne.

Having arrived at Paris, and taken up his residence at Dessin's Hotel, at twelve o'clock Eustatius sent the waiter with his card to present to Lady Charlotte D'Auberville, who had apartments in the same house.

The card was put into Lady Charlotte's hand a few minutes after Gwinnethlyn had rushed into her room, and while the disinterested mamma was pondering in her own mind what would be the best diversion of those absurd feelings which that romantic Gwinnethlyn was so evidently nursing.

"The Marquis of Hardheart!" said Lady D'Auberville, looking with great surprise at the card, which had round it the broad border of deepest mourning. "A young man, is he, Pierre?"

"Yes, miladi," said the courier, "a vere young man. All in de black."

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"Have you shown him into the morning-room?"

"Yes, miladi."

"Very well, then, say I will be with him immediately." Then running to Gwinnethlyn, "Gwinnethlyn, my love, there is our new found kinsman turned up. Here is the young Marquis of Hardheart come to call upon me. Do make haste and dress yourself nicely, and come in and make his acquaintance. I am so glad—it will be such a diversion for you from those horrid vapours that have got possession of you."

"My dear mother, do pray spare me!" said Gwinnethlyn. "I assure you I am in no heart to make the acquaintance of any stranger."

"Gwinnethlyn, not another word; I lay my strict commands upon you."

"Well, my dear Bu', of course I will obey you if you really command me to see him; but pray do not ask me to alter my dress, I feel so languid, and so fatigued every morning I rise, I hardly know how to get through the day."

"Now, Gwinnethlyn, this is really abominable of you to give way to all this nonsense. I know why you will not change your dress. I see very well you have on the dress that was brought you from St. Petersburgh by that horrid sweep-boy. However, it is becoming, and the young marquis will not know where it came from; but I must insist upon your altering your hair, and putting it in those large bands that are so becoming to your style. Come, I will be your attiring-woman."

Lady Charlotte took up the brush and comb, and, while her daughter sat listlessly on the dressing-stool before the glass, Lady Charlotte arranged her hair with great taste in two large and becoming clusters, coming low down upon the cheek, while at the back of the head a rich and voluptuous mass of ringlets fell like a graceful pendent from some exquisite statue.

"There, now, that will do. You look a little pale; but that will be interesting."

Lady Charlotte opened her daughter's chamber-door, ushered her forth, then followed, closed the door after her, and passing through the little boudoir which intervened, the courier, who still waited, threw wide open the large folding-door, and Lady

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Charlotte, with her daughter slightly behind her, sailed majestically into the morning-room to receive the lately found kinsman who had supplanted her own child in the large estates and ancient title of the Marquis of Hardheart.

Who can paint the sensation of the scheming mother when a tall, and though somewhat massive, yet elegantly proportioned figure in deep mourning, turning round from the window, suddenly displayed the well-known and beautiful features of Eustatius! As he bounded past Lady Charlotte, without apparently seeing her, and clasped Gwinnethlyn fast—fast within his manly arms, big tears of joy gushed into his eyes, while he exclaimed—

"Oh, thank Heaven! Never to part! never to part!"

At first Lady Charlotte seemed unable to believe her eyes. Then, as she became convinced that the marquis and that odious sweep-boy were one and the same person, and that both Gwinnethlyn and Eustatius were too deeply engrossed with one another to notice her proceedings, she adroitly drew back to the folding-door, muttering to herself, "Well, this is most extraordinary *écarté*!—to think that I should have tried to throw away that card out of my hand so often, and it turns up the king of trumps after all!"

In another moment Gwinnethlyn and Eustatius were alone, and Lady Charlotte, in the fulness of her heart, convinced that she had now an opportunity of fully punishing Lady Mumble, sat down to write the full particulars of those singular events by which that tenacious being, whom not even a Cronstadt fever, Tom Burman, or the Czar of Russia could overcome, was no less a person than the last catch of high-born match-catchers—the Marquis of Hardheart.

CHAPTER XLII.

READER, what more remains to be said? What more remains to be told? How can the pen of the veracious chronicler keep pace with your warm and perfect imagination? Do you require to be informed that, if there was a being in the world for whom Gwinnethlyn sighed in secret, it was that old companion of her

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youth, who owed more to her than to any other human being? Do you require to be told that, in the rapid joy-chased hours which succeeded their last meeting, Gwinnethlyn became speedily confirmed in that truth which she had long suspected?—the whole world contained nothing so dear to the heart of Eustatius as herself! She had long hoped and believed it. Do you require to be told how silently her assent was given to all those prayers which he so ardently preferred? Do you require to be told how insensibly Lady Charlotte forgot that she had ever entertained the slightest prejudice against him—how perfectly and entirely she withdrew all opposition to their meetings, their walks, their rides, their dinners? Do you require to be told with what exquisite delight the fleeting days glided away, and how contentedly the young peer waited the lapse of that time which was necessary to join indissolubly their hands and fate? Do you require to be informed as to the unbounded liberality of the settlements, the magnificence of the family jewels, or the splendour of the bride's *trousseau*?

Ah, no! If your heart is in the right place, you only require to know that two beings, formed to prove each other's happiness, met together in bonds of the tenderest union.

You do, however, require to know that all the horrors and atrocities through which Eustatius has passed in this book are taken from fact, have been deposed to on oath, are set forth in the Appendix, and—hideous climax!—are still being hourly perpetrated on British children; and that you are called upon by the ties of humanity and the command of Heaven to discharge your own individual responsibility in this matter, before you are entitled to say one word to your brothers in the United States against their slave institutions. Free your own slaves first from the chimneys of your own firesides. Man, woman, or child, you are bound at once to go forth into society, and never to cease your aid, assistance, and exertions, until you have removed for ever from the soil of Britain the disgrace and the curse of her present system of climbing-boys!

"J."

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APPENDIX

Referred to in the foregoing pages, being Extracts from Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee of the House of Lords, appointed to inquire into the expediency or inexpediency of the Regulations contained in the Chimney Sweepers' Regulation Act Amendment Bill; and to Report thereon to the House.—Session 1852-3 *Ordered to be printed, 7th June,* 1853.

Q. 13 & 14. He was boiled, in fact?—Yes; he was in the chimney; it was a steam packet. A boy was used to sweep the flue; the steam passed through the flue, and he was suffocated in a few moments.

Q. 171. Might not the interest of the chimney-sweepers be affected by preventing them from employing the labour of boys under 16 years of age?—There is no doubt that they would have to be at more expense in using the machine, and in employing more men, than in having a little boy. One man could work two or three boys. A boy can do more work than a man can do with a machine. If you do not mind the hurt which the boy is liable to receive, and the liability to suffocation, the profit is much greater of employing boys than of using a machine; it is the master's interest to employ boys.

Q. 213. What are the leading cases of cruelty that led to its formation?—I will state them. The first is that of John Gordon, aged 44, who was indicted before the Lord Chief Baron for having caused the death of Thomas Price on the 11th of July, 1847, by forcing him to enter a hot flue; the prisoner, Gordon, was a master chimney-sweeper, and the deceased was seven years of age: during the day of his death, Gordon sent Price into some flues for the purpose of scraping them, and carrying out the soot; in about five minutes the boy called out to a man named Kerry, who was at another part of the flue, that the place was too hot, and both came out together; he complained to his master of the heat, and told him it was too hot for him to bear; the prisoner, Gordon, replied, that the child was only capping, that is, shamming, and ordered him again into the flue, and on the child repeating the complaint, Gordon struck him several times across the back with a stick; the poor child at length went into the flue again; he was not heard of for some time, when the prisoner went into the flue, and found the child with his face downwards, breathing hard; the child was brought out, and continued to breathe hard and quick; some water was brought, and he was washed; ultimately this child was taken to the cellar of the prisoner, and put upon some straw; he was then further cleaned by Gordon's wife; but not appearing to recover, the prisoner, Gordon, ordered his wife to bring him a rod, which she refused to do; the prisoner said that the child was only foxing, another expression to mean shamming, and went himself and procured a stick, and beat this child so violently, that the little fellow screamed most pitifully; during this night the child expired; a *post-mortem* examination being had, the cause of death was ascertained to have been produced by compression of the lungs, the result of suffocation; the body was hurt in several places, and on his back were many large stripes and bruises. The Lord Chief Baron entered into the case minutely.

Q. 214. Was all that established by evidence in a court of justice?—Precisely. The Lord Chief Baron entered into the case minutely, and told the prisoner at the bar, in his judgment, in addition to causing the death of the boy, he was punishable, by allowing a child at so tender an age to sweep chimneys at all. His lordship then said, on the prisoner being found guilty, that the case, from its atrocity, required some consideration; therefore, he should defer his sentence. On the following day, the prisoner being brought up to receive sentence, his lordship observed, that the prisoner had violated a law intended to do away with the cruelties practised on young persons employed by individuals in the business which he, the prisoner, followed, and that he had, besides, caused the death of a fellow-creature by the course he had pursued. After commenting on his crime, his lordship said he hoped the punishment he was about to inflict would act as a warning to all persons, and he sentenced the prisoner to 10 years' transportation. The date of this case was August, 1847. The next case bears date December, 1850: Stephen Ratcliffe, 11 years of age, was employed by his master, William Davies, of Manchester, to cleanse the flues round a

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steam-engine boiler. He and another boy went into one of the flues, the master being engaged in clearing away the soot, as the lads brought it to the mouth of the flue. After some time, the master called out for a doctor, stating that he believed the boy Ratcliffe was dead, which proved to be the case. About 20 minutes after the deceased was taken away, a person went into the flue which the child had been sweeping, and found the heat so great, that, to use his own words, he "would not have liked to have kept his hand there more than five or ten minutes." The dead boy was found about 10 feet down the flue. He had been out before, and complained of the heat; he was afterwards heard to cry. On examination of the dead body, there was a burn found on the left shoulder, another on the left arm, and a third on the left hip: both his ankles, his face, and his ears were also burnt: some of the burns were severe, the skin being off: the internal organs were found congested with blood, and gave evidence of the child having died of suffocation. The verdict returned by the coroner's jury was, "Accidentally suffocated in a heated flue." That is all that follows the murder of this child. In the year 1850 this is the only result of such a frightful case.

Q. 216. Was the man never put on his trial?—No. In February, 1850, at Nottingham, a boy named Samuel Whitt, 10 years of age, was sent up a chimney, in the grate of which was smouldering a small portion of fire. As the child remained some long period without attempting to return, and made no answer when called, an elder boy was sent up the flue to bring him down; but finding the child jammed fast in the chimney, beyond all power of extrication, the elder boy was obliged to return unsuccessful. A bricklayer was then employed to cut a passage through the wall; but this process being difficult, from the extreme thickness of the building, and likely to occupy much time, was abandoned. The elder boy was again sent up the chimney, when, taking hold of the little boy by the legs, he suspended himself from this child of 10 years of age; a third person below attached himself to the legs of the second boy, and thus they attempted to drag him down, by doubling the weight. By these means the unfortunate child was torn away in an almost lifeless state, half naked, bleeding, and bruised; and, after lingering many hours in dreadful torture, death, more kind than man, put an end to his existence.

Q. 217. What was done upon it?—The result of this in the town of Nottingham showed that the master did not possess any machinery; the child's murder never caused any sensation in the place, and the master was unvisited with any punishment whatever.

Q. 218. Was there any verdict of the coroner?—No notice seems to have been taken of it at all. There are two cases which go back to 1848; in one case a sweep was stolen from Nottingham, and brought to the chimney-sweeping trade in Hull. In another case, a child was proved to have been sold five different times to as many different master sweeps; and, at last, this coming before the magistrates on sworn testimony, the child was brought forward in court by a stout middle-aged woman, Mrs. Chapman, in whose care he had been put by Mr. Perritt, surgeon. The lad was unable to walk, and was placed by the woman on the table. On partially removing a large shawl which covered him, and taking away from him certain cloths which were wrapped round the right arm and both legs, their appearance gave a very shocking sensation to the magistrates, who found both knees very much swollen, and also the ankles and the right wrist, the nurse who put him on the table saying that both his legs were as soft as a mummy.

Q. 219. What was the age of the child?—Ten years of age. The boy, and other witnesses corroborating him, informed the magistrates that in this enfeebled condition he had been carried on his master's back from place to place, as he was unable to walk, and had been forced to go up and clean several chimneys. The boy stated that his master had beaten his arm with a boot, which caused the swelling of the wrist; and in this state he was carried to climb twelve chimneys on Saturday morning. The day before this evidence was given, after this child had swept two chimneys, he was taken and laid under the window of Mr. Maloney, and thence removed on the back of a man named Batty, to sweep other chimneys. The surgeon, on being examined, deposed, that he was called in to view the child on the day before the testimony was given, and that he considered the child's life to be in danger. Alderman Cookman, the magistrate, who tried the case at Hull, declared from the bench that such a state of things was so horrible, that he would see the master should be prosecuted, and he would pay the expenses himself. "As to slavery," said the Alderman, "talk about slavery, there is no slavery in the world like this."

Q. 222. Do you know what the result was?—No. The next case happened at

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Sheffield, on the 1st of July, 1848. A climbing-boy having dropped one of his shoes in a ditch, the master being informed of it, took the lad up by his leg and foot, and dashed him with considerable violence on the ground. The child being rendered insensible, the prisoner's brother exclaimed, "Thou hast done it now; thou hast killed him." It was then proved that the prisoner had been in the habit of making this lad stand for a long time on one leg with two bricks on his head. The child on being, brought forward, exhibited a wound to the Mayor behind the left ear, which had been made by his master penetrating the lower lobe of the ear with his thumb-nail. On being made to show his feet, they exhibited severe marks of excoriation, the result of climbing chimneys; and it was proved, that on the proceeding Wednesday, in the Fair-week, he had climbed no fewer than nine chimneys; and into this slavery the child had been sold by his own mother.

Q. 224. What was done on those nine offences?—There is no decision reported on the cruelty in that case. We now come to one of the latest cases, the case of George Wilson, ten years of age, who, on the 19th June 1851, at Hunslet, near Leeds, was, by his master, sent up to clean nine chimneys, one after the other. In the tenth chimney the child expired. On this case coming to my knowledge, I immediately wrote to the coroner of the district, Mr. Blackburn, who sent me the following reply: "Sir,—In answer to your inquiry, I beg to say, that I held an inquest last week upon the body of George Wilson, 10 years old, who was suffocated in a flue at Hunslet, near this place. It appeared in evidence, that on the same day the boy had swept nine chimneys prior to entering the flue; but there was not sufficient evidence to show the master's knowledge of the circumstances, or I should have directed the jury to find him guilty of manslaughter. It was a cruel case, and I immediately communicated with the magistrate's clerk upon the subject, who, I expect, will take up the matter. From what I could learn, I believe the practice of sending boys up chimneys and flues is very common here, and there is a difficulty in getting parties to make complaints."

Q. 228. Can you give any estimate of the number of infants still employed in defiance of the law, and therefore liable to be similarly murdered to the boy at Hunslet?—Yes; as near as we can calculate in the United Kingdom, the children employed in defiance of the law are no less in number than 4,000.

Q. 232. Now, in your opinion, to what cause is this gross violation of the law due?—In London, where of course, in a population of two millions and a half, as many difficult chimneys must exist as anywhere, and larger buildings, the Act is perfectly observed. There may be an exception here and there, which proves the general rule; but, in the country, as a general rule, it is totally disregarded; and for this reason, that in the country the law is administered by unpaid magistrates, and in London it is administered by stipendiary magistrates. In London the magistrates do their duty; in the country the magistrates neglect their duty. This is additionally strengthened by the fact, that in London public opinion is omnipotent, and there is a powerful press which depends upon no one, and this is, therefore, wholly free; whereas in the country the only press that does exist is a sort of bastard and dependent press which has for its subscribers and supporters the magistrates, who throughout the country are the chief persons violating the law. The consequence is, that when any case is known of a child climbing in a magistrate's mansion, the press does not court an exposure of the cruelty, because that magistrate is one of the chief subscribers and supporters of the paper.

Q. 234. I met a Staffordshire magistrate, and a lady of very large fortune. The Staffordshire magistrate told me, that the law was totally violated and disregarded on this subject throughout the county of Stafford; and he believed his own chimneys were cleaned by boys, as well as every other person's. I asked him to come before your Lordships to give evidence of this fact; but he declined to do so. I asked him how he could sit on the bench, and convict other people of violating the law, when he was aware that he was a violator of the law. He told me that it was a matter of perfect indifference to him how his chimneys were swept; and that if a case came before him, he should certainly convict others, although he broke the law himself. The lady of large fortune told me, that she had all her chimneys swept by boys, and, let the law be what it would, she would do it, and that she would have no new-fangled notions. I asked her how she could think of setting an example of so much cruelty She told me that her chimneys were very large, and that she always made a point of inquiring of the dear little boys if they were perfectly willing to go up, and they were never hurt. The Staffordshire magistrate, in her presence told her that he had

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[illegible] He and another boy went into one of the flues, the m[illegible] [illegible] away the soot, as the lads brought it to the mou[illegible] [illegible] called out for a doctor, stating that he [illegible] [illegible] which proved to be the case. About 20 minutes [illegible] a person went into the flue which the child had [illegible] great, that, to use his own words, he "w[illegible] [illegible] hand there more than five or ten minutes." T[illegible] [illegible] down the flue. He had been out before, and [illegible] [illegible] was afterwards heard to cry. On examination of the d[illegible] [illegible] on the left shoulder, another on the left arm, and a [illegible] [illegible] his face, and his ears were also burnt: some [illegible] the skin being off: the internal organs were found congeste[illegible] [illegible] of the child having died of suffocation. The ver[illegible] [illegible] jury was, "Accidentally suffocated in a heated flue." [illegible] the murder of this child. In the year 1850 this is the only [illegible]

[illegible] never put on his trial?—No. In February, 1850, at [illegible] Samuel White, 10 years of age, was sent up a chimney, [illegible] was smouldering a small portion of fire. As the child remained [illegible] attempting to return, and made no answer when called, an elder [illegible] the flue to bring him down: but finding the child jammed fast in [illegible] power of extrication, the elder boy was obliged to return [illegible] A [illegible] was then employed to cut a passage through the wall [illegible] [illegible] from the extreme thickness of the building, and likely [illegible] was abandoned. The elder boy was again sent up the chimne[illegible] [illegible] by the legs, he suspended himself from this chi[illegible] [illegible] person below attached himself to the legs of the second [illegible] [illegible] him down, by doubling the weight. By these me[illegible] [illegible] away in an almost lifeless state, half naked, bleeding [illegible] many hours in dreadful torture, death, more kind [illegible] existence.

[illegible]—The result of this in the town of Nottingham [illegible] not possess any machinery; the child's murder never caused [illegible] and the master was unvisited with any punishment whatever.

[illegible] any verdict of the coroner?—No notice seems to have been [illegible] There are two cases which go back to 1848; in one case a sweep [illegible] from Nottingham, and brought to the chimney-sweeping trade in Hull. In [illegible] was proved to have been sold five different times to as many [illegible] at last, this coming before the magistrates on sworn [illegible] was brought forward in court by a stout middle-aged woman, [illegible] had been put by Mr. Perritt, surgeon. The lad was [illegible] was placed by the woman on the table. On partially removing a [illegible] and taking away from him certain cloths which were [illegible] the right arm and both legs, their appearance gave a very shocking [illegible] who found both knees very much swollen, and also the [illegible] the right wrist, the nurse who put him on the table saying that both his [illegible] as a mummy.

[illegible] the age of the child?—Ten years of age. The boy, and other [illegible] informed the magistrates that in this enfeebled condition [illegible] master's back from place to place, as he was unable to [illegible] and clean several chimneys. The boy stated that [illegible] which caused the swelling of the wrist; [illegible] twelve chimneys on Saturday morning. The [illegible] had swe[illegible] [illegible]

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found a boy coming out of his own chimneys with his back and head a mass of scars and bruises. The lady appeared much shocked at that, and said that she never allowed anything of that sort; but still she persisted in saying she should sweep her chimneys by boys, in defiance of the law, because it keeps her furniture more clean. Now, in answer to that objection, I can say I have always had my own chimneys swept by machinery, and to test the fact of dirt or no dirt, on a yellow satin couch I put a sheet of clean writing-paper before the chimney was swept in the drawing-room; after the operation, I took the sheet of paper away, and it was wholly without soil; no powder or dust that would have hurt anything; it was quite fit to write a letter upon to any person: the only dirt made, was the dirt of the chimney-sweep walking backwards and forwards on the carpet, which would occur in both cases: I may say also, that, as honorary secretary to the society, every letter I get is filled with complaints of the difficulty of procuring convictions, because the magistrates themselves sweep their own chimneys by boys, and thus throw every obstacle in the way. It is a great discouragement for any man to go and lay an information before any magistrate of a crime, when he knows that the magistrate himself is guilty of that crime: I also wrote to the late Mayor of Manchester, Sir John Potter, who is a leading magistrate, and asked him to join this association while he was mayor; he sent me back a reply with the armorial bearings of the mayor's seal, an official letter, which I wish to read to the Committee: "Sir,—I have to apologise for not having replied sooner to your note of the 4th ultimo: I deprecate, as much as any one, the cruelties which have been and are still practised in some (I hope few) instances towards climbing-boys; I know, however, that in very many of the best houses in England the flues, though not in the least dangerous, are so constructed, as to make the use of a sweeping-machine quite impossible, and I cannot think it reasonable that in such cases proprietors should be compelled by Act of Parliament, at a very serious cost, to pull their residences in pieces: entertaining these opinions, I cannot join you, though I highly esteem the humane and charitable motives which, I am sure, actuate your proceedings. I have the honour to be, sir, your faithful servant, POTTER, Mayor." He has put his official signature to that, and the date of it is, "Manchester, 2nd Nov., 1850."

Q. 305. Have you any further evidence that you wish to offer?—Mr. Glass stated that a machine cost £3 10*s.*; now very good machines are manufactured by Mr. Every for considerably less than that.

Q. 390. Have you any dangerous chimneys in your neighbourhood?—Yes, we have.

Q. 391. Can you name any?—I have a case here: this is a plan of the dwelling of Lord Beaumont, which I sweep regularly (*producing a paper*).

Q. 392. What is the name of the house?—Carlton Hall. This is the kitchen part where the tower stands: there are 23 chimneys that go up in this tower; they all go about 60 feet, or perhaps not quite so much, up to the roof; then they descend somewhere about 15 yards, and go on flat; then here they go up again about 50 feet rise. Now when the boy comes here, he cleans this out; all the soot lodges here (*pointing it out on the plan*).

Q. 393. You consider the dangerous part to be in the horizontal line?—Yes, that is where the danger lies.

Q. 394. Are you of opinion that those chimneys might be easily made sweepable with a machine?—Quite easily; there is nothing to hinder it. Doors could be built at a very reasonable expense, and it could be swept with a machine, without ever putting a boy near it.

Q. 395. What would you estimate to be the expense per chimney?—It would be done for from 8*s.* to 10*s.*, taking them all round.

Q. 396. Have you been in the habit of sweeping these chimneys?—I have swept them for about seven years and a half.

Q. 397. How have you swept those chimneys?—Chiefly by boys.

Q. 398. When did you sweep them last?—As near as I can tell, about three months ago.

Q. 399. You swept those chimneys with climbing-boys?—We have.

Q. 400. Have you always gone with your own son to sweep those chimneys?—Yes.

Q. 401. Were you not afraid for your son's life in sweeping such dangerous chimneys?—Yes. Whenever that boy swept those chimneys, I always followed him on the top to meet him again, lest anything should take place, that I might know where he was.

Q. 402. You have followed him on the outside, that you might be ready to help him in case of difficulty?—Yes.

Q. 403. For what purpose?—To break through the chimney.

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Q. 404. To extricate your son in case of danger?—Yes.

Q. 405. You were so fearful for your son's life that you followed his course on the outside, that you might be ready to cut him out, should difficulty occur?—Yes.

Q. 504. What was the case at Leeds?—That was not my case, but I was a witness to it; it was a case in consequence of a boy being admitted into a boiler-flue; they dismissed it, considering that the flue did not commence until it had got through the bed of the boiler.

Q. 539. What were the hours that those boys were chiefly employed?—At this season of the year they were employed from three or four o'clock in the morning till three or four o'clock in the afternoon in that part of the country; that is, in some parts of Yorkshire and some parts of Lancashire; that practice is not now carried on there.

Q. 540. Would a boy be able to continue that amount of work day after day?—They do not consider Monday a working day; on Monday they arrange the work to commence with Tuesday, and Saturday is only half a day; they finish at nine or ten o'clock, and then they collect the soot the rest of the day.

Q. 541. Do you know any instance in which a child has been kidnapped for the purpose of being devoted to this employment?—I have one on record in my pocket, that I took from the *Stamford Mercury*.

Q. 542, It is not a case that you know from your own knowledge?—No.

Q. 543. Has it been verified in any way?—Yes, by the authorities; I made inquiries at York about it, and the police at York told me that it was true.

Q. 544. How old was the boy?—I think it stated that he was twelve.

Q. 545. Have you altered any dangerous chimneys?—I have altered some hundreds.

Q. 546. Is it your opinion that nearly almost all dangerous chimneys might be swept by machinery?—I should say that 99 out of every 100 might be swept by machinery, taking England through.

Q. 547. Have you seen some very dangerous chimneys?—I have.

Q. 548. You think that with the adaptation of chimney-doors, most of them might be made sweepable by the machine?—They may with a trap-door.

Q. 549. From your observation, should you say that the climbing system is on the increase or on the decrease in the provinces?—It is on the increase; I have reason to know that.

Q. 550. Can you trace in any towns good effects resulting from the conviction of offenders against the Climbing Act?—Yes, there is Whitby; it has not had a climbing-boy in it for 11 years, and at Halifax they will not suffer a climbing-boy to appear.

Q. 551. How is it at Huddersfield?—At Huddersfield again, until very recently, it was totally dispensed with.

Q. 552. Can you state at which town or city in the whole kingdom there has always been found most difficulty in respect to obtaining convictions of offenders against the Climbing Act?—Manchester.

Q. 635. Do you know of any instances in which the magistrates appear to have given unfair decisions, in order to evade the law?—Yes, I think so.

Q. 636. Was there not a case which occurred at Salford Town Hall?—There was.

Q. 637. What was that case?—The man was convicted in a £5 penalty. He said, "I shall not pay it." The magistrate said, "Then I will give you three days' imprisonment." We thought, if only three days' imprisonment was given, it was not worth spending money upon the conviction; he was liberated forthwith, and we all came away together. We refused to pay any more expense when the sentence was only three days' imprisonment.

Q. 638. Do you know who the magistrates were before whom that conviction took place?—I am not certain whether Mr. Trafford was one, and whether Mr. Walker was the other.

Q. 639. It was at the Town Hall in Salford?—Yes.

Q. 640. Were they paid magistrates or unpaid magistrates?—They were unpaid magistrates.

Q. 648. Should you say that the climbing system is on the increase, or on the decrease?—It is on the increase at present.

Q. 649. Of all the towns with which you are acquainted, where, in your experience, is there the greatest difficulty in obtaining convictions under the Climbing Act?—I should say at Manchester.

Q. 658. What was Mr. Cockbain's objection to having his chimney swept with the machine?—Williams went, and took the machine with him, and a boy also: he put

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he machine in the chimney buckled up, and sent a boy up unknown to him, pretending that the machine could not clean the chimney.

Q. 659. Must not that have been under the impression that the machine would do no good?—He was under the impression that he would rather do it with the lad than with the machine. He would have had to do the work himself if he had used the machine, but the boy did it without him. If the machine had been used, he must have been working; but while the boy was working in the chimney, he himself was playing.

Q. 662. What effect do you think it would have had if the magistrates generally had set the example of obeying the law, instead of breaking it?—It would have had great influence, no doubt of it.

Q. 663. Do you mean to say that the magistrates generally have set the example of breaking the law?—Yes, I do; because they allow children to sweep their chimneys, and they do very little to protect them.

Q. 843. Did you ever see a chimney that could not be swept with a machine if soot-doors were put to it?—No.

Q. 845. You are a Fellow of the Royal Society, and one of the Examining Court of the College of Surgeons?—Yes.

Q. 846. You have been several times elected President of the College of Surgeons?—Twice; nobody has lived long enough to be three times elected.

Q. 847. You are also consulting surgeon to the Westminster Hospital?—Yes.

Q. 850. Can you state the earliest age at which you have known this disease to come on from this cause?—In order to be able to give you the best evidence, I inquired of my nine colleagues at the Court of Examiners of the College of Surgeons upon this subject, and ascertained that the earliest age at which any of them had seen the disease was in a child of eight years old; it usually appears about 12 or 14, and at any after period of life. It may be removed in the first instance by operation, and the patient may get well; but the disease is very apt to return, and if it does, it usually destroys life; it is an awful complaint, to which children should not be exposed, if it can be avoided.

Q. 859. Is there any case of this kind at present in the Westminster Hospital?—No; I do not think the complaint prevails so much as formerly, since the chimneys have been cleaned in London by the machine.

Q. 860. Before the machine was adopted, within your experience it was not an unfrequent disease?—No; I saw it frequently.

Q. 861. As a man of great experience and science, what is your opinion of the practice of employing climbing-boys for the purpose of sweeping chimneys?—I would have no person employed to climb a chimney who had not arrived at ordinary years of discretion, to enable him to judge for himself. If a grown up man chooses to run the risk of the disease, it is fair enough; but a child who does not know what he is likely to encounter, ought not to be placed in such a situation.

Q. 862. Will you favour the Committee with the names of your colleagues in the Court of Examiners?—The President this year is Mr. Hawkins; he is the person who saw the child of eight years of age in St. George's Hospital. The Vice-Presidents are Mr. Luke and Mr. Keate. The others are Messrs. Lawrence, Travers, Green, Stanley, Arnott, and South; they are all surgeons of hospitals, viz., St. George's, St. Bartholomew's, Guy's, St. Thomas's, the London, and the Middlesex.

Q. 866. But you would prevent children of tender years being affected in that way?—Certainly; I would permit no person to go up a chimney unless they had arrived at years of discretion.

Q. 881. Have you seen many instances of chimney-sweeper's cancer?—Not many; I have seen some.

Q. 882. Were those which you have seen in children or in adults?—Generally in young men.

Q. 883. Of what age?—Nineteen or twenty; I have seldom seen it in children. I should state that I have been very much connected with hospital practice, and the in-patients of a hospital generally must possess a degree of comfort which is beyond the reach of poor chimney-sweepers: they seldom attain the degree of comfort that entitles them to go into a hospital; the going into a hospital implies that the person has decent external covering, and one or two changes of linen. Therefore, these poor children are more often to be met with in the infirmaries of workhouses, and in the wretched abodes attended by dispensary surgeons.

Q. 884. Then are the Committee to understand that a chimney-sweep could not

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get into a hospital unless he had two changes of clothing?—Not generally; in serious cases of accidents and broken limbs no doubt the neighbours would subscribe to give them the means of coming in; but, generally speaking, they are in such a state, that they have no clothing sufficient to enable them to come in.

Q. 885. Generally speaking, are you of opinion that the poverty of the sufferers prevents many instances of this disease being known in hospitals?—Yes; I think a great deal more of them is known amongst parish surgeons.

Q. 886. Although we may have evidence of some cases which have been seen in the hospitals, you are of opinion that a great many more cases must have occurred which never could find admittance there?—I should say so.

Q. 905. Do you find the present Act extensively violated with the cognisance of the magistrates?—I fear the magistrates are very indifferent about enforcing the law; the witnesses have sometimes a great deal of trouble, and are put to great inconvenience; in fact, it is next to an impossibility now to convict any sweep; for when they go into the house, they are aware that they are so closely watched, that when they have boys with them, they turn the key of the door, so that it is impossible to detect them; but in nine cases out of ten they only take the machine with them as a cloak.

Q. 948. Do you know of any cases of children having been roasted to death in the business?—I know of two cases; I witnessed one: two chimneys went into one; near the top it was one chimney, and below two; it was forked a few yards from the top; the poor fellow went up one of the chimneys, and when he had got near the top of the chimney, some of the soot of this chimney fell into that chimney in which there was a fire; the flames went up like gunpowder, I suppose, and the poor boy came tumbling down the one where there was a fire, and was burnt to death.

Q. 950. What was the other case?—The other case was at a factory near Mr. Houldsworth's; the boy was cleaning a boiler-flue; I was foreman of the jury, so that I am acquainted with all the particulars of that case: the boy went into the flue; but after going up a short way, he returned, and said, "Master, it is very hot; I cannot bear it;" the master said, "O thou little rascal! thou art larking," or something of that kind, and he drove him up by force, and said that if he came back again, he would give him a severe punishment; he did not come out again alive. This boy's name was William Wall.

Q. 1226. It was after that that the magistrate made the observation, that the magistrates were most unwilling to convict in those cases?—Yes; and it is not at all denied.

Note BB.—Dissenting minister's son a sweep-boy of Scarborough.

At this very hour, or until very lately, there was a poor child condemned to the slavery of sweeping chimneys, in defiance of the law, at Scarborough, whose father was, and in all probability still is, a dissenting minister preaching in that town. Some benevolent person having found out the child, offered to teach him to read; to this father objected, on the ground that if the child were taught to read, he would no longer work at his business as a climbing-boy!

Note GG.—Fire lit under a child to drive him up a chimney.

The Earl of Shaftesbury, in introducing the Chimney Sweepers' Amendment Bill, in the Session of 1854 (see *Times*, April 5, 1854), detailed to the House of Lords this most horrid case, in which a master sweep at Nottingham had forced his climbing-boy, James Hart, five years old, up a chimney, by the inhuman stimulus of lighting a fire under him in his own house; and when this barbarity failed of compelling the poor infant to climb the flue, the master (it being in the depth of winter) plunged the child into a large butt full of water in the yard, with threats of murder. Owing to the child's total ignorance of religious belief, his evidence had been necessarily excluded by the magistrates, although the burns upon his person and the testimony of the surgeon fully bore out his statement.

The master had also beaten the child with great cruelty, and for this assault was imprisoned for six months.

Mr. Reckless, the mayor of Nottingham, appeared to have taken up the case with the most praiseworthy vigour. He said, "I saw the boy, and a more pitiable object I never saw."

William Phillimore Stiff, being sworn, said, "I am one of the medical officers of the Nottingham Union. On the 21st November inst. I saw the boy James Hart at his mother's house, in Sandy Lane, in Nottingham. He was in a most deplorable

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state. He had ulcers on his elbows, both his knees, back, fingers, toes, instep, and other parts of his body; swelling at the back of his head; ulcers, arising from burns, which appeared to have been produced by putting him up a hot chimney. Those burns must have been done more than four or five days. He had scratches on his back and contusions on his head, produced by blows." Sworn at Nottingham, this 25th November, 1853.

Another witness, speaking of the boy, said, "His shirt appeared to be dipped in blood."

Lord Shaftesbury went on to say, "There was a great deal of professed zeal for the inculcation of religion and the education of the people; but this system was as destructive to the soul as to the body. He had caused an inquiry to be made, and it was found that among 482 boys, in 170 different places, there were only 21 who were acquainted with the common rudiments of reading, and only two acquainted with the common rudiments of writing. No less than 4,000 children of tender years were still consigned to this disgusting and unnecessary employment."

Note HH.—Stolen child.

In a book called "THE CLIMBING BOY'S ALBUM," edited by the celebrated poet, James Montgomery, and published by Longman, most interesting details are given (p. 289) of a child under four years old, stolen from its parents, and sold to a chimney-sweeper at Bridlington, in Yorkshire, who sent him up to sweep a chimney, accompanied by an elder boy. The latter, "to teach him his business," left him sticking in the flue, when presently the poor infant fell down the chimney, and was dashed against the grate. Surviving this frightful injury, we learn that Lady Strickland, hearing of the child, went to see him. She was much interested in his appearance, and took him home with her. After he got to Boynton, the seat of Sir George Strickland, a plate of something to eat was brought him. On seeing a silver fork, he was quite delighted, and said, "Papa had such forks as those." He also said "the carpet in the drawing-room was like papa's." The housekeeper showed him a silver watch: he asked "what sort it was: papa's was a gold watch." He then pressed the handle, and said, "Papa's watch rings: why does not yours?" Sir George Strickland being told this, showed him a gold repeater. The boy touched the spring, and when it struck jumped about the room, saying, "Papa's watch went so." Seeing one of the young ladies at her pencil, he said, "Are you drawing, ma'am?" and when surprise was expressed at this, he said, "My mamma used to draw." At night, when going to bed, he said he could "not go to bed without saying his prayers;" he then repeated the Lord's Prayer almost perfectly. The account he gave of himself was, that he was gathering flowers in his mamma's garden, when a woman came in and asked if he liked riding; he said "Yes;" and she told him he should ride with her. She then put him on a horse, after which they got into a vessel, and "away we went." He had no recollection of his name, and was too young to think his father could have any other name than that of papa. His dialect was good, and that of the south of England. He was described as having beautiful black eyes and eyelashes, a high nose, and a delicate soft skin. He had had, he said, "many *mothers*, but only one MAMMA;" and when told that his *mother* had been sent for, he expressed the greatest terror, till assured that he should not go to her again. Many endeavours were made at the time to discover his relatives, but without success; and it is understood that he continued to reside, and received his education, in the family of Lady Strickland

State of Stafford.

At last even melancholy Stafford shows ground for hope. The tradesmen, headed by a draper, a Mr. Cooper, have taken their town in hand, formed a Mechanics' Institute, and been fortunate enough to ask and receive the support of the young, courageous, generous, and eloquent heir of Peel, to help them with his lectures, oratory, and purse. Sir Robert's example is being followed by his brother magnates in the county. The *Times* can absolutely be bought in the town; and the day may at last arrive when Stafford will not be quite the bye-word of country towns.

THE END.

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